













# A VARIED LIFE







Bullingham Photo

T. E. Gordon

# A VARIED LIFE

A RECORD OF MILITARY AND CIVIL  
SERVICE, OF SPORT AND OF TRAVEL  
IN INDIA, CENTRAL ASIA AND PERSIA

1849-1902

BY GEN. SIR THOMAS EDWARD GORDON

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WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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## PREFACE

THE possession of a continuous diary, which I have kept up since 1857, and some notes of my earlier experiences, has tempted me to produce this account of a varied life. I find that my diary notes recall vividly the events and matters of which they speak, and prompt recollection of the fuller information concerning them and their times, which is stored in the cells of my memory. My personal acquaintance with five Central Asian Sovereigns during an active life in the East may lend some interest to my story. I am painfully aware of the egotism which runs through the narrative, but I find some relief in the common knowledge that this defect is more or less inseparable from an autobiography. I have tried to make the Memoir as light as possible, and not to burden it too heavily with minor details, or much repetition of what has appeared in my books, the "Roof of the World" and "Persia Revisited."

I am under obligation to the *Pioneer* for kind permission to reproduce the article on the Kashgar Mission, which appeared in their issue of 24th July 1874, and the extract from a further article in a later issue the same year.

T. E. GORDON.

May 1906.





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## CHAPTER VI

(1874-1879)

ON completing my special service under the Indian Foreign Office, I reverted to military duty in the Army Staff post of Assistant Adjutant-General of Division; but I had made up my mind to return to regimental work, and finding no opportunity of a command under the Commander-in-Chief, I applied for one of the corps under the Foreign Department, and was posted as Commandant of the Mewar Bhil regiment, serving at Kharwara, in Rajputana, and giving many opportunities of camp life. There again I had excellent sport with gun and rifle in the jungles of the Mewar Hill tracts, which were under my superintendence for the purpose of keeping order among the tribes. I found the Bhils of Mewar less backward in civilisation than those of Malwa, of whom I had previous experience in Central India, but still retaining many of the violent characteristics which cause them to be regarded as the Ishmaelites of those parts. The patronage of the military corps that are administered by the Foreign Department of the Government of India belongs to the Viceroy, and when Lord Northbrook personally told me of my nomination to the command of the Mewar Bhil regiment, he laughingly alluded to a Bengali Babu's description of the wild people from whom it is recruited, which he had seen in some amusing extracts from educational examination papers. The Babu, in answer to the question, "What do you

know concerning the aboriginal Bhil inhabitants of Central India?" wrote: "The Bhil is a black man, and still more hairy; he shoots you with an arrow, and puts your body in a ditch; by this you may know your Bhil."

I took up my new command in October 1874, and found plenty to do in regimental affairs, which had been allowed to run a course of their own that was not conducive to good order and military discipline. The regiment was organised on the "irregular" system, with a complement of only four British officers, and the previous commandant, being easily influenced, had made matters so bad that the officers proceeded to quarrel seriously amongst themselves. A Court of Inquiry, composed of senior officers, had investigated all the circumstances, with the result that only the junior of the four officers was permitted to remain with the regiment. A new commandant, second-in-command, and adjutant were appointed, and thus it was that I went to command the Mewar Bhil regiment. The adjutant had arrived a short time before me; he was Lieutenant Arthur Conolly, nephew and namesake of the well-known Captain Arthur Conolly, who laid down his life nobly in his country's cause at Bokhara, in 1842. He was a most capable officer and a delightful companion. He possessed superior qualifications as an Oriental linguist, being proficient in Persian and Pushtu, as well as Hindustani, and moreover he was a dashing rider. He afterwards was associated with me in the Afghan war, when I found his services as Political Officer to be of high value.

I went home on leave of absence in 1875, and shortly after, in 1876, I published, and illustrated with my own sketches, "The Roof of the World."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The narrative of a journey over the high plateau of Tibet to the Russian frontier, and the Oxus sources on Pamir.

The title was suggested to me by Colonel Sir Henry Yule, R.E., the well-known authority on Central Asian geography. I may add that the book was well received by the public.

I returned to my regiment in 1876, and was summoned as Honorary Aide-de-camp, to attend the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, at the great Delhi Durbar, held on 1st January 1877, for the proclamation of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria, as Empress of India. I met many old friends at that gathering, and amongst them, the late Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart, then commanding the Lahore division of the army and expecting soon to leave India on the expiry of his tenure of command, little knowing what the goddess Fortune had in store for him. One of his great friends, Colonel Baigrie of the Bombay army, a well-known tiger-hunter, suggested to me that we should make up a party to show General Stewart some good tiger-shooting, for, with all the instincts of a sportsman, he had never had the chance of seeing the Indian jungle king in his forest home. I had the run of some promising tiger ground in Mewar, and was able, with the help of the good trackers and tried hunters in the Bhil corps, to organise a very successful party.

I think this shooting party deserves more than a passing notice, and I shall accordingly mention some of its scenes and incidents, not only on account of their interest, but also to break the monotony of my record of military and other official matters. The country we shot over is known as the Mewar Hill tracts, partly peopled by uncivilised and semi-savage Bhils, the original inhabitants of the land, who, on being dispossessed of the fertile parts by the Rajput invaders some centuries ago, took to the wooded hills and deep forests, and became thorough "bushmen," skilled trackers of the denizens of the jungle, and practised hunters of all that can fall to their arrows, for most

of them are even yet in the bow and arrow stage. When the commandant of the Mewar corps is a sportsman, he has every inducement to wander in these haunts of wild men and wild beasts, for official reports, based on personal knowledge of the remote districts and their unreclaimed inhabitants, are expected from him. The sportsman commandant thus finds in his camp life there a happy combination of business and pleasure, interesting political work and good shooting. The love of wild sport shown by these untamed Bhils, their truthfulness, and a certain merriment of manner, appeal to the congenial English mind, and the commandant, being brought into contact with the local hunters, and inspiring confidence among the people, becomes, in his capacity as political officer, an arbitrator in their feuds and disputes whose decisions are generally readily accepted. For such an officer the best trackers and hunters are always eager to "seek and find" the big game of the jungle.

In and about the Kharwara jungles the dry season sets in early in the year, and by the end of March the scorching sun has killed the long grass, made the coverts leafless, and dried up most of the springs, streams, and ponds. Only in the damp localities, by the few springs that outlive the general swallowing up, and on the banks of the stream-beds that have pools here and there or a trickling flow, is the green cover, so necessary for the tiger, to be found. There he sleeps by day, and watches by night to seize the hog and deer that come to drink; and when he finds the game suspicious of danger and avoiding the drinking pool where he lies concealed, he makes a great disturbance by roaring fearfully, and then quickly steals away to a distant pool he knows of, which instinct tells him the alarmed animals will resort to, when fleeing from the other. When unsuccessful with game he turns his attention in the

afternoon or early morning to the domestic cattle. During the hot dry months, contract herdsmen collect from village and hamlet great numbers of lean bullocks and gaunt buffaloes to take to the distant low-lying river-banks for grazing and water, when the home grounds, tanks, and wells can no longer afford one or the other. There the bullocks roam in the bush jungles which remain green, and the buffaloes wallow in the swamps and marshes. Herds of female camels with their young are also seen browsing in these jungle tracts, which thus in the extreme heat of summer become the haunt of both domestic and wild animals—tame, timid, and fierce. The tiger vastly prefers the plump pig and the tender deer to the tough ox and the rank flavoured camel, and it is only when he cannot get the former that he takes the latter. But only when driven by desperate hunger will he dare to attack the big buffalo: the buffalo calf he takes freely when the chance of a stray one is offered, but he fears the formidable full-grown animal, and seldom molests it when in company with others. There seems to be a good understanding of mutual non-interference between them when they happen to come together, and I shall tell later on of a tigress we found in the same piece of marshy ground with a herd of buffaloes who, though well aware of her presence, showed no alarm or concern.

There were many good trackers and tried hunters in the ranks of the Bhil corps, and one of the native officers, by name "Homa," undertook to lead them out with my shooting party, and show that he himself, notwithstanding his rise in life from sepoy to the commissioned grade, had not lost any of his old cunning in woodcraft and tiger tactics. Success in life, such as Homa had secured, generally tends to make a native lazy and stout, but when I saw Homa ten years later, he had still the spare figure, the alert

step, and the quick eye of the hunter. He took as his second-in-command Hubla, a serjeant in the Mewar corps who was a noted hunter, and also a Bhil bugler to communicate with the long line of beaters, for some of the trackers who were distributed among them being trained soldiers knew the bugle calls, and were thus able to pass Homa's orders.

The Kharwara party met at my house there on the 22nd of April 1877. It consisted of<sup>1</sup> General Donald Stewart, Colonel Baigrie, Colonel James Hills, Major Furse, Major Jopp, and myself. Dr Simmonds joined us for a few days. The party broke up on the 18th of May, and between those dates we bagged ten tigers and six panthers, without injury or accident to any one engaged in the sport. But on one occasion my heart almost ceased to beat from the terrible suspense I was in while I watched a beater, unconscious of danger and beyond help, walking as it seemed to me into the jaws of death. The trackers had marked down three tigers, the shooting points on rocks and trees had been selected, and the guns were all in position, when something appeared to happen far forward in the "beat" which caused a long check. As captain of the "shoot" I was anxious to do the best on such a promising occasion, and accordingly I left my post on the extreme right, and passed along the rear of the "guns," communicating with each as I went, and telling them that I was going forward by the left flank to join the beating line. After passing the left gun, and getting forward in low jungle at the foot of the ridge along which the beaters were advancing, one of two Bhils with me whispered,

<sup>1</sup> The late Field-Marshal Sir Donald Stewart, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.S.I.; the late Colonel Baigrie, C.B., Deputy Quarter-Master-General, Bombay army; Lieutenant-General Sir James Hills Johnes, V.C., G.C.B.; Colonel G. A. Furse, C.B., late 42nd Royal Highlanders; Colonel John Jopp, C.B., Bombay army.

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"Look to the right, on the face of the hill: three tigers!" We stopped to watch, and then saw a fourth great tiger moving forward slowly and sulkily after the three, and on reaching a shady spot under a rock, lie down. The beaters were then coming on quickly, rather ahead of the elephants, which could only proceed slowly through the thick bush cover, and to my horror I saw several of them suddenly appear, with one of the village tom-tom performers, coming on carelessly, believing that the three tigers which they had seen were all that had been driven out, and that these were well on towards the guns. I could do nothing but look anxiously from my distant position, and I watched rather breathlessly for the meeting about to take place with the sulky big tiger under the rock. Fortunately, the beast was seen by a beater a little higher up the ridge than the others, and he promptly shouted to them; but the careless drummer with his silent tom-tom, not perceiving the direction of the alarm, walked straight on, and found himself face to face with the tiger, which had risen on hearing the shout. The drummer, whom we afterwards ascertained to be the village barber, boldly stood his ground, beat his tom-tom furiously, yelled frantically, even making a rush forward when he saw the tiger turning to go, and as it went away slowly and sulkily he yelled his shrillest and beat his loudest in wild triumph. No shot had yet been fired at the tiger, otherwise the rage of fear and fight would probably have produced a different ending to that meeting.

When the elephants came up, I mounted one of them, and took the beater line on towards the guns which, in the meantime, had opened a hot fire. Stewart, Simmonds, Hills, and Furse were in the thick of the fight, but the great luck was Stewart's, for he killed one tiger dead, and sent two, wounded,

down the line. One of these died hard between Hills and Simmonds; the other Baigrie and I followed, and killed from the elephants. The fourth tiger managed to get away untouched, but the trackers took up the trail, and we bagged it the next day. The tom-tom beater, whose plucky behaviour I had witnessed, was not forgotten: he was sent for, complimented, and well rewarded, much to his surprise and satisfaction, for this bold barber was a most modest man, and he was not aware of having done anything remarkable. The joke was made that he had the closest shave of being killed, but it wasn't good enough for him or those about him to see: the reward rupees filled his eye and mind too much, and he was seriously happy. Had he hesitated and turned on meeting the tiger, it would have been on him in an instant; and we could therefore well afford to be liberal to him, as, irrespective of other considerations, his courage had saved us a gratuity for his family.

In the jungle game of sport, "Stripes," the tiger, ranks high above "Spots," the panther, and as the two are sometimes found in the same beat, we had the usual rule that, when the former was known to be there or thereabouts, the latter was to pass unchallenged, so that the royal animal should not be driven off his way to the guns by the sound of a shot. But at other times we used to go after panthers of which the trackers had intelligence, and the following incident of good sport with one is, I think, worth relating. A fine male had been marked down in a deep shady dell, and the guns were so well placed that we made certain of bagging it. But by stealthy creeping it managed to get away without giving any of us the chance of a shot, and succeeded in reaching some low rocky hills about a mile distant. In his rocky home there is no more dangerous beast than the vicious, agile panther or leopard. Baigrie and I went forward to turn it out,

remaining together in case of the beast attacking. The trackers pointed out a cave as the probable hiding-place as far as they could judge, and they proved to be right. The cave was formed by a tumbled mass of broken rock on the side of a narrow, steep ravine. We climbed on the blocks above the opening, accompanied by two Bhil hunters with the spare guns, and the sporting bugler who always went with the beating line and was as keen as any hunter of the party. On this occasion he carried a long stick with which he poked about in the crevices of the rocks, peering closely all round for the hidden panther. Suddenly he touched me on the shoulder, silently pointing right underneath, where, through a narrow opening, the panther's spotted skin could be seen a few feet below. The trackers were warned by signs, and when all were safely placed, the bugler pushed his stick down and poked the panther, which sprang out blazing with rage, and fell at once to our shots. To the onlookers, as well as to us, it was a most exciting finish.

We drove for another panther the next day, but without success. Nothing came of the beat beyond the interest which attaches to the outcome of an Indian jungle when thus disturbed and driven. There is always something curious to see and observe: the dainty deer stealing out softly, the wild pig trotting along stolidly, stopping sometimes to listen to the distant noise of beater and elephant behind, then going on cautiously, and looking about carefully at the edge of the open before making a rush for some distant covert; the skulking hyena and jackal, sneaking away to dark hole and corner to escape from bright daylight; the smaller birds flying, the bigger ones running, and among the latter the gay peacock, with outstretched, flexible neck held low, and moving with a quick, undulating motion, preparatory to discordant cry and flight. Then comes a flock of the big bounding

"langoor," common in the Mewar jungles, magnificent specimens of the monkey tribe, tall and lithe, with sinewy limbs and long, strong prehensile tail as useful as a hand, black face with white hair surrounding, and grey fur coat. When disturbed, they make their loud, hollow-sounding, "boom-boom" cry heard at a great distance.

A huge langoor gave me and himself a great fright once by jumping up beside me on a tree, unaware of my presence. I was perched perfectly motionless about 10 feet from the ground, on the look-out for a panther, which was being driven by the elephants from some bush cover. I was seated on a thick bough, with my left arm passed loosely through a stirrup leather buckled round an adjacent upright branch to steady me, when a gang of langoors came booming and bounding out of the jungle on the other side of the open space I was watching. Like clever skirmishers they came rapidly across the clear ground to reach quickly the covert, on the edge of which I was posted well hidden. A great big fellow, whom I would not have liked to tackle unarmed even on firm ground, jumped up my tree in wild exuberance of spirits, and sat on the same branch as myself, almost touching me, turning quickly to look in the direction from which he had run. My clothes were of grey brown tint, well calculated to resemble the jungle surroundings, so the langoor did not at once discover that he was seated along side of "dreaded man." I shrank from the close proximity of the ugly-mouthed, sharp-fanged, sinewy, powerful brute who, happily for me, was of a mild disposition, and in the nature of things ignorant of his great superiority on his native tree. I was also so close to it that I could not have used my rifle. The situation was thus for but two or three seconds, I would say, when the langoor became suddenly conscious of being within touch of a man. The change from chattering confidence to paralysing terror was instantaneous and

ludicrous. He utterly collapsed and dropped to the ground as if dead, recovering in a dazed manner and running away with short, quick steps like a rabbit, not a bound in his body, or a curl in his tail, which now dragged behind like a bit of rope, instead of being arched proudly over the back with an inward double turn at the end. With me the change from fear to fun was equally instantaneous, and I was most gratefully amused at the absurd appearance of the limp langoor as he ran away in terrible fright.

I have alluded to the good understanding of mutual non-interference between tigers and buffaloes, and the following which occurred during our shooting party of 1877 is an instance of it. We knew of a tiger being in a long bit of bush and reed jungle ending in a marsh close to the "Mahi" stream. A path ran across the ground at the head of the marsh, and it was decided to post the guns on it for the drive so far, from the upper end of the jungle, then, if unsuccessful in finding, to beat from that to the river-bank, through the marsh. There were some small islands or bits of firm ground in the marsh, covered with the thick close-leaved "corinda" bush, a favourite refuge for tigers, owing to its branches curving down to the ground at some distance from the stem, and forming an umbrella-like shade, keeping the damp ground upon which it grows more than usually cool. The marsh was occupied by a large herd of buffaloes, but the hunters said this did not necessarily show that the tiger was not there. The first drive from the upper end of the jungle to the path proved unsuccessful, and the guns having moved forward to the stream-bank, arrangements were made for the elephants to beat the deeper part of the marsh, the Bhils accompanying and yelling on the flanks. The appearance of the elephants sent the great clumsy buffaloes plunging about grotesquely and snorting loudly in alarm, which aroused the tiger, and it was seen to

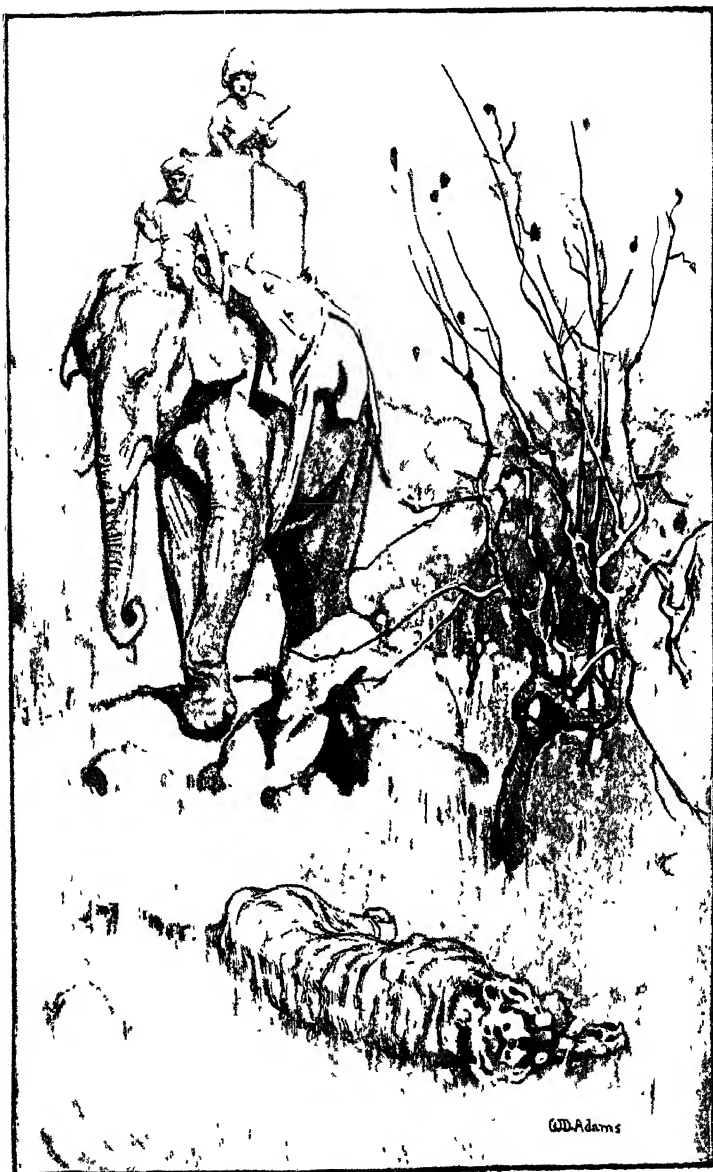
steal quietly from patch to patch of covert until it reached the gun line on the river-side, where it was killed.

In this Kharwara sporting trip I nearly lost a valuable female hunting elephant lent to me by the Maharana of Udaipur, from suffocation in a morass. Baigrie and I, mounted on our steady retriever elephants, went into the morass in search of two wounded tigers, and immediately on entering, my elephant, when putting aside the tall thick reeds with her trunk in obedience to the mahout's directions, so as to allow free passage for the howdah, came suddenly on a tiger within a few feet, crouched as if about to spring—most lifelike, but in reality quite dead. The elephant was evidently suffering from an attack of the nerves that day, for notwithstanding her well-earned reputation as a staunch animal in presence of danger, she gave a shrill cry of terror, and swung violently round to run away, but was brought up sharp by a severe blow from the heavy driving hook-prod carried by the mahout; and being thus reminded of the stronger wills on her back and neck, she faced the tiger, and went up to it cautiously with outstretched trunk. It looked as if the tiger, sorely wounded, had drawn itself together in readiness for a furious leap, on hearing us approach the swamp, and died in that position, the body sinking a little in the spongy ground, and so preserving the expectant attitude, with the head down.

The elephant had hardly recovered from this shake to her nerves when she was exposed to another alarming form of unexpected danger, which for a time made her wildly distracted with fear. Having found one of the tigers, we passed down an oozy stream-bed, with high reed cover in it, leading from the swamp, in search of the other which was said to be there. As the course of the stream narrowed, Baigrie left it to beat along the side, while I continued to search the reeds. Further on, the stream-bed became smaller, the soft mud deeper,

and the banks under the surface steeper, and soon the elephant began to show signs of suspecting the bottom on which she trod. Then, directed by the mahout, she tried to get on to the firm bank. The more she tried the more she sank, for immediately she ceased to progress, her great weight, with a top load of a heavy howdah and three men, told on the yielding bottom, and her struggles became frantic, and almost fierce. She uttered a peculiar low squeak of fear, and trembled violently, swaying her bulky body from side to side in her great efforts to pull up a leg, first on one side, then on the other, out of the sucking swamp. The mahout knew the danger of the quagmire to his elephant, and that, even if rescued, there was great risk of dislocation of a limb from the extreme violence of her struggles. He asked me, and the Bhil hunter who was behind me in the howdah, to jump out on the bank. I got out by watching my opportunity to jump clear when the elephant swayed towards the bank. The Bhil handed out the guns, but could not be induced to jump out himself. He was unable to speak in answer to what we said to him, and seemed dumb with terror and paralysed with fear. At last he pulled himself together to make the effort, and scrambled out of the howdah. In doing so he nearly fell into the mud alongside the elephant; and had it so happened, she would have trodden him down purposely, in her efforts to find firm footing.

All this had, as may well be imagined, caused considerable uproar, and a number of Bhil beaters came together on the spot. The mahout called to them to cut thick branches, and bring them for the elephant to put under her feet. Every Bhil is handy with the axe, and the beaters generally carried long-handled small ones for defence, and clearing away bush obstacles, so that branches were soon cut and brought. The elephant, prompted by her mahout, as



TIGER SHOOTING IN THE KHARWARA JUNGLES

"A steady retriever elephant."

T. E. G.]

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well as by superior instinctive sagacity, began at once to push the branches under her feet, grasping the thick ends with her trunk and forcing them down transversely. She did this so cleverly and energetically that she soon found advantage in the support given, and with this feeling of confidence she redoubled her efforts, and became so desperately eager for material to grasp and push into the oozy ditch that she thrust out her trunk at her attendant coolie (the mahout's stable assistant), who was standing near her head, clearly with the intention of stuffing him into the ooze, and helping herself out of it; the coolie, fortunately, saw the cunning, wild look in her quick, small eye just in time, and jumped out of her reach. The mahout became aware of this danger to those standing near, and warned the Bhils to throw the branches to the elephant and not come too near her. Immediately she began to find a firm footing she recovered her senses, became obedient to the mahout, took a short rest, and managed to struggle on to the bank. I then mounted another elephant and went with Baigrie in search of the wounded tiger, which the trackers had now discovered to be quite near us. We found it less than 200 yards from the spot where this scene with the elephant had taken place. There it had lain concealed and quiet, through all the shouting and disturbance. We killed it after an exciting fight in which it charged our elephants several times at close quarters, and unsteadied them so much that straight shooting was difficult. It had been so disabled by a shot in the flank that it was unable to spring, and its charges were fierce rushes to bite the elephants' legs, which it did not succeed in doing. A clever elephant can generally keep off a tiger, under such circumstances, with stunning and crushing blows from its heavily toe-nailed feet.

As the shooting party was a special one, I had impressed upon Homa and his men my great desire

to make it a very successful one, and they assured me of their intention to work so closely that every tiger seen by any of the "Sahibs" would certainly be bagged the same day or the next. This sounded rather boastful, but we were all ready in the end to acknowledge the perfect fulfilment of the trackers' boast. On one occasion there was an amusing difference of opinion as to the reality of what one of the Sahibs saw, but which the Bhil scout posted with him did not corroborate, and which none of the hunters were inclined to believe, the result, however, being to support the trackers' boast by the slaying of the biggest tiger of our bag.

Intelligence was brought of the "biggest tiger ever seen" having been tracked down on the left bank of the Mahi, at a place 7 miles distant from our camp, and on reaching the ground we found it to be most unfavourable for "driving." It was a wide, flat expanse of low, close, thorny bush, crossed by a deep nullah, with one or two small pools in it which were completely hidden by overhanging trees and underwood. There was a rocky height with tall trees on the further side of the nullah. Homa said it was a most difficult piece of ground to beat and to place the guns in satisfactorily. There were very few trees in the bush plain high enough to give a view and command over any distance, favourable to the sportsman. Homa, after enquiry from the local shikaris, believed the tiger to be in the deep, thickly-wooded nullah, by the side of a pool under the rocky ridge, and said that in such ground the chances were much against it being seen, should it move slowly and cautiously forward through the dense jungle.

The best arrangements under the circumstances were made, and the beat commenced. General Stewart was on the right flank point, and I was next to him. The four others of the party were to the left. The

beat, which had to commence 2 miles off, was long in coming up, and when it was evident there was no tiger in front, I went to General Stewart, who told me that he had seen a large tiger pass slyly out round the flank of the beaters, and go behind them. I asked the Bhil scout posted with him about this, but he said no tiger had appeared, only a wild boar, which went back exactly as the Sahib said. On Hubla coming up he spoke of a bullock being seen to go forward, one of a herd in the bush: also of a young camel which had strayed from its companions browsing there, and that both had passed to their left and our right. Both Homa and Hubla declared it was unlikely a tiger would escape the scout's notice, but said, as the Sahib was positive he had seen the beast, they would collect the beaters, and take them back to do the drive all over again. Stewart said that probably the fumes of the strong "mahua" liquor drink of the previous night (for there had been the usual carouse, the Bhils being free drinkers when the shooting "tips" are good) had worked in the scout's head under the hot May sun during the long beat, and sent him to sleep. I reminded the trackers of what they had said that every tiger seen by one of the Sahibs would be bagged: they laughed good-humouredly, and said it was yet to be proved that the Sahib was right, and the scout wrong—tiger or boar?

Beaters and elephants were eager for water after their toilsome hot work in the heavy jungle, and they went to the Mahi stream to drink, which caused considerable delay in getting them all together again, and reforming the line where they had first commenced. At last, however, we heard the welcome bugle sound the "advance," and then found keen interest in keeping a sharp look-out. When the "beat" reached the rocky bit above the nullah, the Bhils were seen to become very excited, collecting

in knots, some climbing the trees, and having stones handed up to them to throw. There was a great burst of shouting and tom-tomming: then a lull, followed by a storm of yells and howls, all pointing to a "find." Presently the bugler was heard sounding the "officers' call," and I knew that Homa wanted some of the guns there. Then I saw an elephant ploughing its way towards us through the thick bush, and going towards it, I found that the mahout had been sent with word of the big tiger seen by Stewart having been tracked into the nullah. It had returned to the same shady spot at a pool, whence he had been driven before, unseen by the beaters, and now, sulky to a degree after his long, hot walk, he refused to leave his cool retreat. The hunters and trackers kept him under observation in the nullah until we arrived, and then he was driven out and killed. He was a truly magnificent male, big and old; a veritable monarch of the jungle.

Signs of early approach of the south-west monsoon rains brought our pleasant party to a close on 16th May, after a most enjoyable time in the Kharwara jungles. The Bhil hunters ascribed our good luck and satisfactory bag to the favour of the monkey god, Hanuman, the popular deity of those parts, whom they were in the habit of pretending to propitiate by copious libations of the strong fermented liquor made from the flowers of the "mahua" tree, and the occasional sacrifice of a he-goat, for we used to give them the means to provide a plentiful feast and a long drink when we had a successful day. And before our party dispersed, they had good reason to be further well satisfied with our liberal parting tips.

Snakes were very plentiful at Kharwara during the warm, moist "Monsoon" season, but though often seen in our houses, no instance of snake-bite

came under my personal observation; and this was also the case throughout my long service in India. Fortunately, snakes are as anxious to avoid human beings as the latter are to avoid them. I had many escapes from treading on snakes, and I once had just time to fire and blow off the head of a large one, which raised itself erect to strike at me as I suddenly came upon it in long grass, when out shooting. At another time I was about to step upon the tail of a snake, which had wound its length round a cool porous water-jar under my washstand, when, becoming aware of my presence, it rapidly unrolled itself and escaped. I generally found my dogs to be unerring scouts in discovering danger, and they were ever ready to give warning of snakes. One evening, on entering the drawing-room, they at once made for a table which had a cover, the corners of which touched the floor, concealing what might be underneath, and, barking loudly, they soon started a snake. At Kharwara I had a sporting spaniel which always accompanied me on my walks in the garden, where snakes were naturally more often to be seen, as the watering attracted frogs that serve them as food. My spaniel was ever on the alert there: snake-terror never made her take to headlong flight, but only to back to a safe distance, where she stood to bark and watch.

Some natives fear to harm a snake lest the Evil Spirit, of which they regard it to be an animal incarnation, do harm to them. They will assist towards its destruction by pointing it out, but will not raise a hand to kill it. At Kharwara I always had my gun in a safe place with small shot cartridges ready for use against snake intruders, and I cleared the premises of several from time to time. There was a very wicked-looking black snake, about 3 feet long, which had its hole in the partly exposed roots

of a tree close to my house, and on the direct path from the servants' quarters. It was a terror to the domestics after dark, and I often saw a small oil light placed on a pile of stones at the foot of the tree, which they said was to frighten the snake, but which, one of them told me quietly, was to propitiate it as a sign of veneration. Their cry of "Kala samp!" (Black snake) was at times a hint to me to kill, as well as a warning to others, when they saw it. I was generally late with my gun, but at last I just managed to hit it as it glided into its hole and disappeared. Some days later, the gardener pointed out to me, with great satisfaction, legions of carnivorous ants crowding in and out of the hole, and said they were eating the black snake.

I was with the regiment in camp when a snake charmer came into the main street, and summoned the men with his rattling tom-tom and shrill reed-pipe to see his performance. On finding that he was welcome, he unslung the two baskets which held his snakes from his shoulder bamboo yoke, and commenced. One basket only had been uncovered, and several small snakes were out moving to his pipe-music, when the cover of the closed basket was gently lifted aside by the protruding tail of a large snake. A powerful terrier of mixed breed, appropriately named "Crib," which had accompanied me, and remained close at my heels uncertain as to what might happen, on seeing the moving tail of the snake close to him, sniffed at it with outstretched head and neck, ready to back away quickly; but on being patted and encouraged by my companion, he dashed forward, seized the tail, and ran off, dragging out of the overturned basket a snake about 5 feet in length, which, however, he promptly dropped on realising what was behind him. The snake pulled itself together, and remained curled up in a state of fear and semi-torpor, while the terrier barked

furiously at it from a safe distance. The large snakes taken about for these performances are of a lethargic nature, and are exhibited on account of their size and docility. The snake charmer was afraid of the dog disputing with him the possession of the big snake, and begged me to call him off, after which he collected and covered up his reptile properties, and went away in high indignation.

The only injury I ever saw that was in the first instance attributed to snake-bite was the loss of a finger which an officer suffered under the belief that he had been bitten by a snake. When asleep at night he happened to cast his arm over the side of the bed, and was violently awakened by a sharp bite on one of his fingers. Calling for a light, he and the servant who brought it, on hasty examination, decided that the punctured marks were those of snake-bite, and, after tightly binding his arm in two places to stop circulation, he proceeded with the servant's assistance to cut off the bitten finger. In the meanwhile his dog-cart was made ready, and he was taken quickly to the regimental hospital, where medical treatment was promptly applied. On the surgeon afterwards examining the severed portion of the finger he pronounced the bite to be that of a rat! Sometime after when I met this officer, I felt my eyes drawn by a sort of fascination to his hand, and I saw the sign of what had been described to me.

General Donald Stewart had formerly been Deputy Adjutant-General, and for a time officiated as Adjutant-General in India; and therefore, having a large acquaintance with the *personnel* of the Army, he was consulted regarding an officer to be appointed First Assistant Adjutant-General at Army Head-quarters, with the prospect of becoming Deputy Adjutant-General in 1879. He said that the man for the post was commanding a regiment in Rajputana, and named me.



The Commander-in-Chief having approved, I was duly appointed, and joined at Simla in April 1878. It was a coincidence in its similarity to my appointment in 1872, as I was again taken from an isolated small station in a jungle district to the gay summer capital of India, for most interesting work on the General Staff of the Army. The result of the move in this instance, however, was very different from what happened on the previous occasion, when I suffered a great disappointment through an "accident" such as, happily, rarely occurs. But I missed, as Adjutant-General, my good friend of old 95th and later days, General The Hon. Frederick Thesiger, he having been replaced by an officer of the Indian army. I also missed at first, when tied to the office, my free life in the Mewar regiment, and my talks with the sharp-eyed, quick-witted trackers and hunters, some of them influential native officers, whose knowledge of the tribal feuds and disputes, as well as of the haunts of game, helped me both at work and at play. But all the same I was glad to return to the busy military world, and to be able to look forward to professional advancement, which was unlikely to come to me had I remained in remote Rajputana.

Being in a manner behind the scenes at Army Head-quarters, I soon saw that we were drifting towards the second Afghan war. The Amir Sher Ali had made even the pretence of friendly relations impossible, and I was not surprised when I was asked for details regarding the Amir's refusal to permit the return journey of the Kashgar Mission through Badakhshan. This was one of many unfriendly acts on his part, the sum total of which signified undisguised hostility to the British Government. The climax was reached when he forcibly repulsed, at his outposts, an English envoy of high rank, of whose coming he had formal and timely announcement by a letter from the Viceroy of

India, attesting the importance and urgency of the envoy's mission. This last act of indignity and defiance resulted in a proclamation of war (22nd November 1878), addressed by the Viceroy of India to the "Amir Sher Ali Khan of Kabul, to his Sirdars and subjects, and to all the people of Afghanistan," in which they were informed that the British Government had still no quarrel with the Sirdars and the people, and desired none, and that upon the Amir Sher Ali alone rested the responsibility of having exchanged the friendship for the hostility of the Empress of India.

After the proclamation of war I was directed by the Adjutant-General to remain at Simla in charge of what I called the "printing press," when the Commander-in-Chief should leave for the "front" as was proposed. I begged hard to be allowed to accompany him, but without success. When taking an evening walk on the Mall, and thinking over this great disappointment, and the need I had of an influential friend, at that moment a friend indeed appeared in Mr Lyall,<sup>1</sup> Foreign Secretary. He asked me what part I was to play in the war, and was surprised to hear that I was to remain with the office in Simla. He said that I had qualifications which could be used to better advantage by the Government, and spoke of the services of a senior officer being required by the Foreign Department for a contingent of troops to be furnished by the Punjab Sikh chiefs, who had volunteered to assist against their traditional enemies, the Afghans. I followed up this kind suggestion next day, and it ended in an interview with the Adjutant-General to request the Commander-in-Chief's permission to take temporary employment under the Indian Foreign Office for special service. When I was told that acceptance should carry with it loss of my lien on the appointment of Deputy Adjutant-General, I agreed to the

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir Alfred Lyall, P.C., G.C.I.E., K.C.B.

condition ; but its application was never seriously contemplated. The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Frederick Haines,<sup>1</sup> on being informed by the Adjutant-General of the circumstances of the case, said of me in a very complimentary manner that he wanted my services as much as, if not more than the Foreign Department, and that I should accompany him to the front. This restored my spirits, and I had the pleasure of thanking Mr Lyall for the good luck which had come to me through his timely assistance. I also told my friend, General Donald Stewart, who had come to Simla at that time for consultation with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief, he having been appointed to command the army to operate against Kandahar.

The Army Head-quarters camp was established at Lahore, where the Viceroy also took post on the outbreak of war. After the first operations, resulting in the defeat of the Afghans and their retreat from Jelalabad and Kuram, the Commander-in-Chief, with a few staff officers of whom I was one, passed up both lines of advance, visiting the positions taken up and held by the forces under General Sam Browne<sup>2</sup> and General Frederick Roberts.<sup>3</sup> Just before the visit to the Kuram force, the principal political officer with General Roberts, Colonel Waterfield<sup>4</sup> (Commissioner of the Peshawar district), had a fall from his horse in which his leg was badly broken, and as recovery was likely to be slow, I was asked to take his place. The Adjutant-General was, in the interests of his department, inclined to object to this, but the question was decided by the Commander-in-Chief giving his hearty approval. This opportunity of taking part in the campaign was fortunate

<sup>1</sup> Field-Marshal Sir Frederick Haines, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., C.I.E.

<sup>2</sup> The late General Sir Sam Browne, V.C., G.C.B., K.C.S.I.

<sup>3</sup> Field-Marshal Earl Roberts, V.C., K.P., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., etc.

<sup>4</sup> The late Colonel W. Garrow Waterfield, C.S.I.

for me, as the idea of the Commander-in-Chief remaining in the field had been necessarily abandoned, on the Government desiring his presence at their Council meetings during the continuance of the war. After this question of my employment with the Kuram force was settled in my favour, the Adjutant-General received a letter from General Donald Stewart at Kandahar, asking that "Tom Gordon" might be sent to his command as Assistant Adjutant-General in succession to Colonel James Hills, V.C., about to vacate on promotion to Major-General. Much as I would have liked and preferred this, the chance came too late, as I was under orders to take up the political appointment.

I took a very valuable recruit with me to my new post for the Intelligence Department, in the person of Nurab-Din, a Pathan from the Peshawar frontier, who was one of the small escort from the Guide corps sent with the Kashgar Mission in 1873. It had been arranged that all the men so sent with us then, should be able to read and write fairly, so that on emergency they might be able to make and read written reports and communications. Nurab-Din was utterly uneducated, but his powers of observation and memory were so remarkable, that the officer commanding the Guide corps recommended an exception being made in his favour, and accordingly Nurab-Din joined the Mission escort. He was a very quiet-looking man, with a far-away expression in his eyes, which, in combination with an assumed manner, and a peculiar style of speech when he chose, gave an appearance of weak intellect. In the disguise of a "diwana," which means one of wandering mind, he could pass everywhere as an imbecile, and therefore under divine protection. I took him with me on the Pamir journey, and employed him on special service in the Oxus principalities, whence he returned to India by way of Kabul. For all this good work he was well rewarded, and he returned to Hoti Mardan, near

Peshawar, where the Guide corps is stationed, to enjoy a well-earned rest.

He had come back, however, suffering from a bad abscess on the instep of his right foot, and this, which at first began to heal, after a time broke out afresh, and became so serious that amputation of the foot was considered necessary to prevent worse happening. Like most Mahomedans he objected strongly to amputation, and said he would rather take his discharge from the regiment, than submit to the loss of his foot. He was told it would, in that case, not be a question of the loss of his foot, but of his life. He said he was prepared for that, and held to his decision to take his discharge. He was further told that he was entitled to an "invalid" pension on amputation of his foot, and would forfeit all right to any pension whatever by persisting in taking his discharge; but he would not consent. The colonel commanding had a special regard for the man, and the medical officer made the case an exceptional one, allowing him to be treated as an out-patient. He was thus kept on the rolls of the corps for a considerable time, until further continuance was impossible, and he was then discharged at his own request, without pension, and with but a short time to live, as the doctors thought. But he had strong hope, and remembering that his old friend, Dr Bellew of the Kashgar Mission, who had also served with the Guide corps, was in a good professional position at Lahore, 300 miles off, he chartered an "ekka" (two-wheeled light cart with one pony) and went there to beg his opinion concerning his foot. Bellew thought the case incurable and dangerous, told him so in a kind, sympathetic manner, and assisted him with money for his return home. And I, on hearing from Bellew, also sent him some assistance.

When at Jelalabad with the Commander-in-Chief, I went to see my friend the commanding officer of the Guide corps, which was in camp there, and he told me

of Nurab-Din being with him, waiting for any chance of employment which might offer. I engaged him to assist the caterer of our General Staff camp Mess in negotiating for supplies, and thus he came to be available for other service when I took up my new duties in the Kuram field force. He had recovered the use of his foot so far that he could walk any distance, but he could not run: as he put it to me, he could not do the military "double," but otherwise he was a good soldier. I employed him very successfully as a special messenger where risk had to be run. Eventually, in the second phase of the war, I sent him to Kabul to join Resaldar Mahomed Afzul Khan (late of the Kashgar Mission), who came to the front as a most valuable officer at that time, and was prominent in the negotiations with Abdul Rahman Khan, afterwards Amir. And in all the work of delivering communications and making use of his powers of observation, Nurab-Din rendered excellent service. When the war was over I made a full representation of his case, and obtained for him the rank and pension of a serjeant. He smiled with satisfaction when I told him that he had proved himself a first-rate doctor in saving his foot, which had afterwards served him so well.

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## CHAPTER VII

(1879)

My instructions when I joined the Kuram force were to gain information regarding the warlike tribes and "make friends." I had plenty of opportunities to hear of current events in Kabul. I learnt, as was elsewhere known from other sources, that there had been much popular sympathy with Yakub Khan, whom his father, the Amir, had continued to treat with great severity up to the time of his flight from Kabul. He never appeared to contemplate his son's death, but he aimed at sapping his energies and weakening his mind. It was said that, while causing him to be kept in a state of constant suspense as to his fate, facilities were afforded him of obtaining opium or narcotics for the fullest gratification of Asiatic tastes. Thus Yakub was led to seek relief from the bodily and mental depression of long, close confinement, by recourse to soothing and enervating drugs. In the end he was said to be reduced to a state of indolence and indifference which unfitted him for energetic action. The Amir's favourite young son, Abdullah Jan, sickened and died in the end of August 1878, while the Russian Embassy was in Kabul, and thus the main cause of the father's jealousy of Yakub was removed ; but still he kept him a prisoner. As late as the 8th of December following (this was after the defeat of his troops at Ali Musjid and Peiwar Kotal), he displayed the old animosity towards him, for in a letter of that date to the Viceroy of India, repeating his

grievances against the British Government, he dwelt on the great annoyance caused to him by their mediation in favour of his "undutiful son, the ill-starred wretch, Mahomed Yakub Khan."

The despotic mind of Sher Ali had made him unreasonable and reckless beyond all bounds, and he showed to what lengths he was preparing to go when he said at Kabul, to Stolietoff the Russian Envoy, in a tone of calm madness: "You come to bathe Afghanistan in blood as Vicovitch did. . . ." This Vicovitch was the Russian Agent whose false promises brought on the first Afghan war. Sher Ali was about nineteen years of age when Captain Vicovitch was in Kabul in 1838, and being the favourite son of his father, Dost Mahomed, he must have known all that passed then. It is a matter of history how Sher Ali, two days after writing his letter of 8th December, turned to his gallant son, Yakub, hoping that he might yet be able to rally the disorganised troops, and lead them to victory as he had often done before. But it was too late; four years' cruel imprisonment had made Yakub a changed man, and he was now weak and nervous, and quite deficient in determination and self-reliance. Sher Ali fled from Kabul to Balkh, there to await the performance of the Russian promises of support which had encouraged him to go to war, and on realising that he had been deceived, he fell ill, and died at Mazar Sharif on the Oxus, on 21st February 1879. At the last his heart came round to Yakub, and before he died he formally appointed him his heir and successor. The Afghans remained true to their old choice, and Yakub became Amir without opposition.

One, variously named Zaman Beg, Zaman Khan, and Zaman Khan Effendi, accompanied Stolietoff's embassy to Kabul as interpreter, and made himself extremely useful in many ways. This was the same Effendi who accompanied the Atalik's envoy from



Constantinople, and travelled with us to Kashgar in 1873. We had been previously warned of his true character and were on our guard with him. Before we left Yarkand, we heard that he had succeeded in establishing himself in the Atalik's confidence as adviser on Turkish, English, and Russian affairs.

About three and a half years later, I saw in a news report from Yarkand, after the reconquest of the country by the Chinese, that Zaman Beg had escaped with others to Russian territory in May 1877, when the Atalik came to his death either by violence or poison.

Colonel A. N. Kuropatkin,<sup>1</sup> head of the Russian Embassy to Kashgar in 1876, in his book "Kashgaria," thus describes his meeting with the Effendi at the Court of the Amir Yakub Beg:—

"Some days afterwards Zaman-Khan-Effendi came to us. He was entrusted by Yakub Beg with the conduct of the preliminary negotiations. Our surprise was very great when it appeared that Zaman Khan could speak Russian beautifully, and that he was well educated. (We conversed with him about England, with which country he appeared to have no sympathies, and about European affairs. He evinced very correct notions, and displayed an acquaintance with the situation of affairs in Tunis, Algeria, and Egypt.) He conveyed to us some details about his past, from which we gathered that he was an exile from the Caucasus; that he had received his education in Russia; and that for some political reason he had been obliged to fly to Constantinople. Thence, three years later, Zaman Khan had come to Kashgar, and from that time he had been with Yakub Beg in the capacity of trusted councillor. Zaman Khan had strong sympathies towards the Russians, and has, in fact, shown the bent of his feelings by deeds." Allusion is made to other visits in which Zaman Khan "amongst other things, several times repeated that Yakub Beg had disconnected himself from the English, as he well

<sup>1</sup> Late Minister of War, Russian Government, and later Commander-in-Chief in the Far East.

understood what sort of people they were; that he had not paid attention to them when they sought to sow enmity between the Russians and himself; and that he now understood the advantage of depending on the Russians alone."

The Russians annexed Kokand in 1876, and at once entered on the work of establishing a border-line between their newly acquired possessions and Kashgaria. This resulted in Kuropatkin's embassy, which had a very long journey to make before reaching the ruler, Yakub Beg, who was at that time in camp at Kurla with his army, opposing the advance of the Chinese. The distance from Osh, the frontier town in Kokand, whence the embassy set out, to Kurla, is about 850 miles. Kuropatkin's mission was eminently successful. Yakub Beg knew well that Russian policy favoured the weak and peaceful Chinese rule in Kashgaria in preference to his own, and seeing the uncertainty of the issue of the struggle between the Chinese and himself, he was ready to assure Kuropatkin at their first meeting that he had "only one wish, and that was to preserve the friendship of the Governor-General of Turkistan; that he was a humble individual, and must rely upon the Russians." Thus encouraged, Kuropatkin says in his book: "I spoke to Yakub Beg of the necessity of subjecting himself to the will of the Governor-General of Turkistan." Yakub Beg had from the first been made to feel, in his direct dealings with Russia, that his position as an independent ruler was precarious in relation to his powerful neighbour; and he might well have thought that Baron von Kaulbars (whose embassy preceded Forsyth's) was paying him a doubtful compliment when, at the farewell interview, he congratulated him on being the first Asiatic prince who had concluded a treaty with Russia without the compulsion of previous defeat in the field. Kuropatkin left Yakub Beg's camp on 6th February,

and arrived at Osh, in Kokand (renamed Fergana), on 28th March 1877. His book has a concluding chapter dealing with the events which happened after his departure, and in a foot-note he says:—

“Zaman Khan remained with Yakub Beg till his death (16th May 1877), and was present at the fall of the Kashgarian Monarchy. He then, with other adherents of Yakub Beg, fled to Russian territory, where he met with a hearty reception.”

The following year, 1878, Zaman Khan's abilities would appear to have marked him out as a useful assistant in the Stolietoff Mission to Kabul. No doubt he could talk of the English mission to Kashgar having failed in its object owing to Russia's displeasure with the Atalik, whose death later was an indirect result of not placing himself under Russian protection on the annexation of Kokand. Under all the circumstances, the Effendi, with his Kashgarian experiences, must have had a grand opportunity in Kabul for his reasoning powers. In Kashgaria we judged him to be an adventurer working from love of intrigue, power, and money, and probably also a political exile labouring for the reward of pardon; whichever was his main object he no doubt succeeded in both, for the confidential position which he managed to obtain with the Atalik must have given him full opportunity to serve Russia's interests, as well as his own, to good advantage.

In the end of February 1879, Yakub Khan wrote to the Viceroy of India announcing his father's death, and his own undisputed succession as Amir; and at the same time he made overtures for a renewal of friendly relations with the British Government. But the negotiations dragged, as Afghan public opinion was strongly against any cession of territory, or the establishment of a British Envoy in Kabul. The

moullas and other leaders openly declared that the war had been unpopular with the Afghans, who saw that its cause was personal, not national, and that in cultivating close relations with Russia, the Amir Sher Ali had acted in direct opposition to the advice of the "Padishah of Rūm," the Head of Islam, and against the feeling of the priesthood and the people, who desired to keep the country free from the presence of both Russians and English. They quoted the proclamation of war in which the British Government said they had no quarrel with the Afghan people, and desired none; that they were absolved from all responsibility for the hostile acts of the Amir Sher Ali; and as they, the people, had given no offence, so the British Government, wishing to respect their independence, would not willingly injure or interfere with them. The chiefs of the powerful Ghilzai tribe who held the approaches to the capital urged Yakub to make peace, and affected to believe that as the object of the British Government, in going to war, was to punish the Amir Sher Ali, and upset his pretensions, there was nothing now wanted from Afghanistan but a return to the old friendly relations. They said "The unfriendly Amir has been changed for a friendly one, so now there should be peace." Yakub knew that the British Government would not be satisfied with this barren result of the war, and while most reluctant to order the army to advance to Kabul, yet they were ready to face the necessity if forced on them; but as the popular voice continued to be raised against the British demands, he had to make a show of satisfying the national feeling. Thus the first negotiations failed, and there was talk of the war being resumed. Sher Ali being dead, the Afghans were said to regard an advance on Kabul to mean annexation of their country, and this they were determined to resist to the utmost. On the other hand, the British Government thought that an advance would

have to be made before the terms of peace could be decided. There were signs that Yakub, while the negotiations were dragging, had advisers who organised a plan of campaign to meet the expected British advance in the spring. This plan was to defend the passes, attack the communications, and carry on a guerilla warfare, for they judged that the people would then be with them.

In view of the probable advance of General Roberts' force in co-operation with General Browne's from Gandamak, it was considered advisable to reconnoitre the alternative approaches to the long Shuturgardan pass, so as to outflank any strong resistance which might be made on the main route through the heavily wooded Hazar Darakht. This reconnaissance, which General Roberts asked me to conduct, had to be carried out as quietly as possible, and therefore no escort of our own troops could be taken. I arranged at short notice for a tribal escort of Jajis and Ghilzais, as if for an ordinary visit, and conducted a party of six selected officers, who were successful in obtaining the fullest information. We went up by the main route (23 miles), passed the night in an old fort near the summit of the pass (11,000 ft.), and returned by the alternative routes. I communicated my plan of return previously to but two of the officers, and next morning, when sending off the tribal escort to precede us and flank the main route for our supposed journey back that way as a *ruse*, I informed my own small party that we would follow slowly. On reaching a particular point about a mile down, I saw my two guides, as previously arranged, take a path leading along a side valley, and I then told my companions the concerted plan. The Afghan Governor of the Huriob district which we had occupied—a brave fellow, who had entered our service, and whom I knew to be "faithful to his salt"—was with me, and looked uneasy

(for I had not taken him into my confidence), saying there might be trouble with the Ikhtiyar Khel Ghilzais, through whose lands we should have to pass; but I told him I *had* to do the business, on which he asked leave to gallop ahead, and give warning of our coming. I was obliged to trust him, and on reaching the tents and temporary huts of the clan, I found the head man awaiting me with an offering of bread, milk, and coloured eggs (Easter), of which we all partook. On taking leave, my liberal present completed the bargain, and we passed down safely, travelling in two parties by different routes. It was a successful reconnaissance, and the Ghilzai moulla, who aided me in it and provided the guides, received a good reward for himself and them.

While these preparations for the resumption of hostilities were being talked of, Yakub contrived to reopen negotiations, for he really desired to make peace on reasonable terms, and was only waiting till events should enable him to conclude a treaty. His affairs as Amir were in a bad state, and he had lost ground by his vacillation: at one time trying to attach the fighting party to his cause, at another listening to those who said there were rivals for the throne ready to make terms with the invaders. The latter influenced him most, and inclined him to give way to the English demands. On an offer being made to send a British envoy to Kabul to confer with him, he, fearing to refuse, and at the same time dreading the temper of the people towards an English officer appearing in the capital at that time, proposed himself to visit the British camp, and arrived at Gandamak on the 8th of May. He remained there more than four weeks, and learnt to understand the desire of England for a settlement of the "Afghan difficulty," for he was reported to have said to the chief political officer, when the negotiations were finally closed: "I think this treaty suits you as

well as me." The treaty was concluded on 26th May, and Yakub remained at Gandamak until its ratification by the Viceroy, Lord Lytton, was delivered to him. By this treaty the command of the Khyber pass was lost to Afghanistan, the British red line was advanced to the Shuturgardan and Khojak passes, and a British envoy was admitted to reside at Kabul. Yakub evidently looked to secure the loyalty and goodwill of his troops by means of the money subsidy given to a friendly Amir, and thus to be able to protect the British Mission from insult or injury.

The Amir Dost Mahomed had strongly objected, at his meeting with Sir John Lawrence at Peshawar early in 1857, to a British officer at Kabul as Agent for his Government, and a native agent was substituted; Sher Ali, again in 1869, at his meeting with Lord Mayo, was understood to acquiesce in the residence of British agents anywhere in Afghanistan except at Kabul; while Yakub was said to have stated his inability to protect one anywhere but with himself at Kabul! Yakub bowed to stern necessity when he agreed to the conditions of peace which included the presence of a British envoy at Kabul. He knew it was impossible that the British Government, after going to war to avenge the aggravated insult of having their Embassy refused, and actually threatened with hostile repulse at the outposts, while that from Russia was received with remarkable ostentation, could submit to the loss of prestige which a continuance of the exclusion of their Envoy would convey to the Oriental mind, and accordingly Sir Louis Cavagnari was received in state at Kabul as British Envoy, on 25th July 1879.

By the Gandamak treaty a new province, comprising the Kuram and Huriob districts, extending to the Shuturgardan pass, taken from Afghanistan, was added to our possessions. It was proposed to form a second Guide corps of cavalry and infantry, with the addition

of four mountain guns, under the command of a military officer who would be in administrative charge of the new province. This appointment was tentatively offered to me, but I declined it as my conditions—viz., the rank of Brigadier-General, with military command of all troops in the province, as well as civil control—were not accepted. The offer was similarly made to another officer of my own rank, and was refused for the same reasons. My fear was that unless I was graded as a Brigadier-General, in event of a change of policy, or a redistribution or reduction of provincial administrative posts, I might find myself on the “unemployed list,” of which I have previously spoken, whereas I had the appointment of Deputy Adjutant-General to fall back upon at that time, which always gave a good prospect of professional advancement.

We afterwards carried out other reconnaissances (in force) along our advanced frontier, but they were not so interesting as the Shuturgardan one. In the last of them it was intended that the greater part of the force which accompanied should return after one night's bivouac, and that I should take a detached party to examine the route towards Zurmutt and Ghazni; but while riding with General Roberts the first day, my horse became restive and fell over a hillside bridle-path, landing on the top of me 20 feet down, and giving me a badly bruised shoulder, a broken collar-bone, and other hurts, which completely disabled me. General Roberts countermanded the further reconnaissance which was to have been carried forward the next day, as I was unable to conduct it.

My recovery from this accident was very tedious, owing to the collar-bone fracture being at the point of junction with the shoulder, and consequently a difficult one to mend. It had to be reset twice, and when able to travel I was sent to Simla in July, and on the awful news of the massacre of the Kabul Embassy and escort



being received shortly after, I returned to Kuram as Brigadier-General in military command and political charge. I reached Thull on 18th September, and began to inspect the posts as I passed up to Kuram and Alikhel. I found the troops much weakened and suffering severely from fever, and saw that the transport animals were in a very bad state. The pick of the troops and the transport had necessarily been taken for the force advancing on Kabul, and I soon discovered that I had many difficulties to contend with. Amongst these difficulties was a misunderstanding at Government Head - quarters concerning the actual number of effective troops in my command. For instance, in reference to my opinion concerning the safety of the long line of communications from Thull to Shuturgardan (115 miles), flanked and threatened by hostile tribes, I was officially informed (4th October 1879) through the Foreign Department, that with "nearly five thousand troops" at my disposal there was no cause for alarm. To this I replied by telegram the next day :—

"Regarding request for supports, I would meet impression which appears to prevail that I have considerable number of troops for communications with Shuturgardan by reference to my last disposition return, telegraphed Simla, 3rd October, which shows on that date, total effective strength 6 field, 2 mountain guns, 698 British Infantry, 321 Native Cavalry, 1,462 Native Infantry, including 13th just reached Thull."

The circumstance of my being in political charge as well as commanding the troops, and in the former capacity corresponding direct with the Central Government, produced a curious confusion of authority and judgment in relation to my military responsibilities, as may be gathered from the telegrams through the Foreign Department which are mentioned above. This department is personally administered by the Viceroy,

and I found myself under the necessity of repeating to the Foreign Secretary, at one end of Simla, by telegram from the distant front, what had been previously communicated by the Chief of the Staff from the other end; for full reports were telegraphed daily to Army Head-quarters at Simla, and thence were promptly sent to the Military Department of the Government, which, until lately, was under the military member of the Viceroy's Council.

Unusually severe autumnal fever crippled the native troops badly, and in some places scurvy had appeared among them. The base hospital at Kuram was eventually crowded with one thousand sick and weakly men, belonging to regiments with the Kabul force as well as the Kuram command. The Quarter-Master-General's department was no doubt greatly troubled at the miserable state of the transport, and finally desired to remain in ignorance of the relative number of "unfit" to "fit," as my daily telegram stated. I was requested to omit this information, and merely to state the total number. I was deaf, however, to this suggestion, and continued to report what was very necessary, from my point of view at all events, should be known at Simla. The same department insisted on being puzzled as to the disappearance from the column "fit for duty" of half of the 11th Native Infantry. This regiment had originally been named for the Shuturgardan post in the arrangements hurriedly made at Simla, but when ordered up from the Kuram valley, the prevalence of low fever among them necessitated special inspection by a medical committee, which found three hundred and sixty of them unfit for service, and they were accordingly detained for treatment in the base hospital at Kuram: this left three hundred and fifty to proceed, but by the time they reached Alikhel (7,000 ft.), crossing *en route* the Peiwar pass (8,450 ft.), their condition was such (they were all more or less weakened by

recent fever) that further medical inspection showed them to be unfit to go on to the high camp at the Shuturgardan pass. I then substituted the 21st Punjab Infantry, originally detailed for the Alikhel post, to take their place on the Shuturgardan. The 21st, being composed of the hardier races of the Punjab, did their work well at the Shuturgardan when the position was closely invested by the assembled tribes in the middle of October, simultaneously with the attack on Alikhel. It was afterwards plainly seen that the men of the 11th could not have stood the exposure in the trenches for several nights in succession, at a height of 10,900 feet, which the 3rd Sikhs and the 21st Punjab Infantry had to undergo.

My telegraphic reports to the Quarter-Master-General showed in numbers the "fit" and "unfit" of each regiment day by day, and also the numbers at the various posts; but so eager was the department to account for the reduced garrison at Alikhel by some supposed mistake in my daily disposition return, that I received a telegram:—

"Where is the other wing of the 11th?"

The number of men of that regiment shown as present at Alikhel being one-half of the total regimental strength made it appear in the Simla office that only one wing (four companies) had been sent on, instead of the whole corps as originally ordered. The answer was that the daily telegraphed report showed half of the regiment to be in the base hospital at Kuram. I wrote to the Chief of the Staff from Alikhel, 7th October 1879:—

"An impression seems to prevail that I have a large number of effective troops for guarding the long line of communications from Thull to the Shuturgardan. Regiments, Wings, and Companies are spoken of almost as if they represented a fixed number of men according to the establishment. But the Weekly Return

of the Force has for many weeks past shown clearly the miserably reduced strength of the 1st Bengal Cavalry, Wing 13th Bengal Lancers, 11th, 20th, 21st, and 29th Native Infantry, and the 13th Native Infantry appeared on the scene in similar weak condition. Each corps should at once, from that Return, for effective strength at a time when the communications had to be well guarded, viz., at the close of the Ramazān, have been regarded as a Wing in the sense of representing actual numbers. I don't think I am overstating the case much when I put it in this way."

By the treaty concluded with Yakub Khan on 26th May, the Huriob valley, belonging to the Jaji tribe, and the Kuram district, held by the Turis, both subject to Afghanistan, had been ceded to India, and these were now included in British territory; but there was no time to mark the new boundary before the war broke out afresh. I had fully informed the Government by telegram of the signs of popular outbreak, and on 12th October I wrote regarding the state of feeling among the Jajis:—

"There can be no doubt that they are fully alive to the benefits accruing from a rule which gives them security of life and property, and brings them large profits on every side—especially in the carrying trade, as they have lately found—still their own innate hatred of every one outside the pale of Islam, the pressure exerted on them by their co-religionists beyond the border, and the uncertainty in their minds of the future, all tend to keep them on the *qui vive*, and ready to join against us when we may appear to them weak and unprepared. Just now the constant enquiry is, 'Are more troops coming up?' and all that goes on is keenly noticed and studied, not only by the people immediately about us, but by their brethren across the border."

The month of Ramazān, one of strict fast from sunrise to sunset, coincided with 24th August to 21st September of our Calendar that year (1879), and the

onward movement against Kabul began at its close, when Mahomedan fanaticism is accentuated by fanatical exhortations, severe religious exercises, and self-denying restraints. The occasion then became the opportunity for a bigoted priesthood to preach death and destruction to the infidels, and the every-day talk in the village mosques (the usual meeting-place) was devoted to expressions of this idea, and to plans for its execution. Thus influenced by public opinion, formed and intensified by "mad moullas," our new subjects, the Jajis and Chakmanis, became actively hostile, though supposed to be friendly, or, at all events, neutral. For in order to secure their good behaviour during the advance on Kabul, General Sir Frederick Roberts had carried away with him several of the representative headmen of these tribes, who, while being witnesses to British triumph, were also to be hostages for tribal loyalty. But fanaticism, fanned to burning zeal by the preachings in Ramazān, swept away all considerations of personal and family feeling, and the tribesmen joined against us.

General Sir Frederick Roberts saw that the great extent of the lines of communication which would have to be guarded was a serious cause for anxiety. He knew that it would be necessary to hold in strength the line from Thull to the Shuturgardan, a distance of 115 miles, until such time as the Khyber route could be opened, and in his despatch, dated 15th October, detailing the advance of his force from Kuram over the Shuturgardan pass, he wrote as follows regarding the danger to his communications:—

"Reports too reached me at the time that several of the regiments that had been concerned in the attacks upon the embassy at Kabul had left the capital, and with some guns marched towards the Spiga district of Zurmutt,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I have previously told of the accident which prevented me carrying out the reconnaissance of the route leading from Kuram and Alikhel towards Zurmutt.

with the design of harassing our left flank, as we passed through the Hazar Darakht defile on our way to the Shuturgardan. The knowledge of this action on their part necessitated increased vigilance on mine, for from the place, Gardez (in the Zurmutt country), for which these troops had made, descents were possible at several places along our line of communication, namely, upon the Kuram valley itself through Chumkunni and Keraya; upon the Peiwar Kotal by the crest of the ridge which runs south-west from that place towards the Kuram river; and between Dreikullah and the Shuturgardan, more especially in the narrow defiles of the Hazar Darakht."

I had good intelligence of what was going on among the gathering tribesmen who had arranged a simultaneous attack on the Shuturgardan and Alikhel camps, and I knew on the 13th that over two thousand of them were taking up their positions that night to attack the latter at earliest dawn on the 14th. All our new subjects in the neighbourhood deserted us at this critical time. Headmen who were under obligation to us, and used to be daily on the camp, had been holding aloof in a very suspicious manner, and when the attack took place, only one man belonging to the Huriob, by name Mirak Shah (whom we had appointed Governor), of all the Afghans in our service, remained faithful to us. I have previously mentioned him as accompanying me in the reconnaissance of the Shuturgardan pass and its approaches. The Alikhel and Shamukhel Jajis, with whom we had been on the best of terms since the occupation, undertook, on payment, to patrol by night and give us notice of the movements of our enemy, but played us false that night and joined against us. The Jaji Militia, organised to garrison the towers and posts on the road to Shuturgardan, abandoned the whole line in a body, and made their appearance in their villages during the attack. The rising in the mountains had become general, and

completely enveloped the Shuturgardan and Alikhel. The Mangals and the turbulent sections of the Jajis were the most active members of the hostile combination against Alikhel, and being joined by a large number of eager and restless spirits from the neighbouring Ghilzai and other tribes, who moved in advance of their main bodies, they became so greedily impatient for the spoil of the post, which they made certain of capturing, that on hearing of the near approach of five thousand Northern Ghilzais to join in the attack, they determined to rush the camp, and sack it before these should come to lessen largely every man's share of the plunder. They made the attack just one day before the Ghilzais arrived, and suffered a severe defeat. It had evidently been agreed to attack on the 15th, for the Ghilzais had pressed on rapidly during the night of the 14th, and in the very early morning of the 15th, when within 4 miles of our position, they learnt that the attack had been made the previous morning, and failed, and that the counter-attack delivered by the garrison had caused heavy loss to the assailants. They halted to consider the situation, and then sent in a messenger to me to say that having been deceived by the faithless Jajis and Mangals, they were ready to serve the English. It was a moulla from these same Ghilzais who had assisted me to carry out the Shuturgardan reconnaissance.

Notwithstanding the severe loss to the enemy on the 14th October, the leaders succeeded in again collecting the scattered bands as soon as their dead had been disposed of, and persuaded them that with the aid of crowds of Mangals, Mukbils, and Chakmanis then joining, they could yet overrun and destroy the camp at Alikhel. It was known that large supplies for the army were being collected there, and exciting tales were told of the immense amount of treasure in the camp ready to be sent to Kabul. So while religious

enthusiasm looked to the bliss of Paradise in fighting the infidel, devouring greed looked to the plunder. The Chakmanis were the most important and best armed of the fresh reinforcements, and as their country is open to attack from Kuram, where our cavalry was stationed, I directed a demonstration to be made against their easily approached villages on the Kuram stream. The demonstration had the desired effect: the detachment was believed to be the advanced portion of a large force, and brought the Chakmanis and their neighbours, the Mukbils, back in hurried alarm to defend their homes. This broke up the tribal gathering, and helped to secure the line of communications, so that with reinforcements from the rear, and the movement towards the Shuturgardan of a detachment of all arms from the Kabul force, we were able to send on large convoys of stores of all kinds without loss or delay.

On winter setting in, the Shuturgardan post was evacuated, part of the garrison going to Kabul, and part rejoining my command. I took the opportunity then to settle accounts with our new Jaji subjects who had played us false in the attack on Alikhel, and summoned them to pay a heavy fine, and give hostages for future good conduct. These demands being complied with, I withdrew the troops from Alikhel on the 8th and 9th November, winter at that height (7,000 ft.) being severely uncomfortable to native troops in tents. I had heard of two hostile sections of the Shuturgardan Ghilzais, the Amram and the Karim Khel, making the usual winter migration from their high-lying pasture lands to lower grazing grounds, by a route which would give me a chance of intercepting them; and this I succeeded in doing. They found themselves with their flocks and herds in our power, and promptly paid up the fine of Rs.3,000 demanded for breaking their engagement made with Sir Frederick Roberts, to protect the



road which lay through their territory. They had themselves become robbers on the road which they were paid to protect, and finally joined in attacking the Shuturgardan post. After all, they merely paid back what they made out of the transaction, but it was a satisfaction to make them pay, and to know of their disgust at having to refund, for Afghans are extremely avaricious and fond of money. This happened on the 10th November, and continuing our avenging march, we captured on the 12th six hundred cattle from the Chakmani tribe, who took a leading part in the attack on Alikhel. They paid a fine of Rs.5,000 the same evening, and the cattle were released. The same day a detachment fell upon the Mukbil clan in a secluded glen, and took security for a fine of Rs.1,500, which was paid six days later. They also had swelled the ranks of the enemy at Alikhel.

The Chakmanis are a prosperous and powerful tribe, occupying well-favoured lands on the Upper Kuram stream. Their chief, Saleh Khan, sent his son in attendance on Sir Frederick Roberts with the army to Kabul, as a proof of loyalty to the new sovereignty; but this did not prevent him joining in the rising which immediately followed. He joined with a will, too, and with the Koran in his hand, urged his fighting-men to follow him, and destroy the infidel. Here was an instance of what was known in the Scottish Highlands in 1745, when the father would send his son to "fight for Charlie," while he sided with the "Sassenach" to keep the ancestral lands from passing to others. On this occasion Saleh Khan reversed the position by himself taking the fighting risk, but he had no thought of what hard fate had in store for him—the loss of his money, which an Afghan loves as much as his life.

He had been fully warned of our approach to receive "on the spot" the fine of Rs.5,000, imposed for the active part he had taken in the tribal gathering against

us. He had replied to the notification that such a sum of money had no existence in the whole of Keraya, the country of the Chakmanis, and that he could not therefore do the impossible. He was informed that nevertheless we would visit his country, and repeat the demand. We arrived in his neighbourhood on 11th November, and he came to the camp with a party of his people, whom he stated to be the tribal representatives, and a proposal was made that hostages should be accepted as security for deferred payment. The demand for immediate settlement was not seriously considered by them, and accordingly at earliest dawn next day our cavalry secured all the ways of escape from a group of prosperous villages, and, with the aid of infantry, took possession of six hundred cattle, cows, and plough oxen, which were driven to our camp preparatory to despatch to Kuram. Many of the village old women, the family drudges, accompanied the cows, screaming out much that was most uncomplimentary to the troops (native), and not omitting to include Saleh Khan in their shocking abuse, as the cause of all the trouble, loudly declaring at the same time that he and his friends were well able to pay the fine. In his final visit to the camp after the seizure of the cattle, Saleh Khan had to run the gauntlet of these shrieking furies, and he came before me bareheaded, a sign of deep disgrace, with tears of shame and rage in his eyes: he begged for "Delay, delay," he said, "if only one day more," but was told that the cattle would start in the early morning, and he could follow to the next camp with the money. At that time very cold weather had set in, and the howling women, who seemed to learn quickly all that was passing at the meeting, shouted that the cows would suffer if they were not housed that night as usual in winter. Saleh Khan at last yielded to obstinacy greater than his own, and the money was paid, after which the cattle were driven back to the

villages by a noisy, happy crowd of men, women, and boys.

When these operations came to an end I was summoned to take up my post of Deputy Adjutant-General at Army Head-quarters. I may mention here that my information regarding a popular outbreak among the Afghans turned out to be quite correct, and that, while in the first phase of the war we had only the regular Afghan troops to oppose us, in the second we had the people, as they were led to believe that we meant to annex the whole of their country to India. We not only retired on a secure government of their own choice being established, but we also gave back the Huriob district, which had been annexed under the provisions of the treaty of 26th May. The Jajis had proved themselves faithless, and they lost more than we did by this retrocession. The Turis of the Kuram were loyal, and we gave them home rule and protection. Thus what I had feared, when I refused the appointment of administrator of that new frontier district, came to pass.

In due course, when the honours and rewards for services in the campaign were gazetted, I found myself C.B.

I shall close this chapter with a short mention of three interesting incidents which came within my observation and knowledge during the campaign. One is of an officer, acting as newspaper correspondent, and under military control, who was much puzzled, and a little alarmed, by a request to assist in getting back from the post, a letter he had sent to a provincial newspaper, describing the proceedings of a public durbar which had been held in camp. A gala parade of the troops had taken place in the morning to impress a crowd of tribesmen who came in with their representative "Jirga" deputies, and in the afternoon the durbar was held, at which, in a strong

and sensible speech, they were told what would be expected of them as our subjects. The speech was a premature and indiscreet announcement in connection with the secret negotiations then being carried on between the Viceroy and the new Amir, Yakub Khan. The state of fanatical public opinion in Kabul made the Amir most reluctant to meet the British demand for a rectification of the frontier, which meant loss of territory, and his desire for absolute secrecy was based on the fear of serious trouble at the capital during his absence, should it become known that the peace conditions included the cession to India of any portion of Afghanistan. The officer who addressed the durbar was known for a Skobeloff-like tendency to political utterings, and on this occasion he seemed to have been carried away with the idea that he had authority to speak as he did; but evening reflection revealed a doubt in his mind as to the existence of a letter which he *thought* he had received. Careful search failed to find it, and then he feared that he had made a mistake, but hoped that what he had said might go no further than the camp and its neighbourhood. He remembered, however, the *pressing* hunger for news to be appeased, and he blandly asked a staff officer if any one had been present on the occasion who was likely to have acted as a newspaper correspondent, on which he was told of what was common knowledge (for officers of that force had been tacitly permitted to act as press correspondents) that a certain officer was very active in the news line, and doubtless had sent a detailed account of the day's doings to the leading paper in the Punjab provincial capital. This officer was interviewed, and became somewhat disturbed on being asked if he had so acted, for his connection with the "press" was known, and the durbar proceedings were of the most open and public character, and he could not understand that he had in any way committed

an indiscretion ; but on the object of the enquiry being explained, he became vastly amused with the suspicion that it was the Censor-in-Chief himself who had been indiscreet. The result was that the press correspondent was asked to authorise his letter being taken from the mail bag at a station 100 miles distant down the line, and returned to him through the post. He readily assented, and a telegram was sent to the officer in military command there, directing him to take the necessary steps to have the particular mail bag opened in the presence of himself and the chief Civil officer, and the letter to the editor taken out and returned. Delay thus occurred in the newspaper publishing a reduced account of the durbar sayings and doings.

The second is of a "greybeard" of the Jaji tribe, who intervened at a critical moment to put a question of international law which saved a man from the gallows, and this is how it happened. Transport was a very important matter when the preparations were being made for Sir Frederick Roberts' advance on Kabul in September 1879, and the Jaji carriers did a good paying business with their ponies and mules in our service. There was also a strong demand elsewhere for baggage animals, and the inducements to steal ours and smuggle them away over the mountains for sale were great. Afghans and Pathans are expert horse thieves, as experience on the frontier tells, and they began to practise their powers as such in our camp transport lines. At that time loss was doubly felt owing to the pressing need of every animal for the early advance, and the transport officers were at their wits' end to catch the thieves, and stop this loss. The officer in command summoned the nearest tribal elders before him, and threatened strong measures, but without effect. At last, hearing of a noted horse thief, named Sipahi, a native of the place, being seen about the

camp, he had him arrested on suspicion, and threatened to hang him if the thefts continued. They continued, however, and then the elders were informed that unless the thefts stopped and the stolen animals were returned, Sipahi would certainly be hanged. They allowed that he was a horse thief during the Afghan rule, but they argued that he was only suspected now, and that there was no evidence produced against him. They had done their best, they said, to get the stolen animals returned, but without success. Preparations were then made for the execution: a high gibbet was erected on a prominent spot in camp, within sight of the Jaji villages; the Provost Serjeant with a party from a British regiment was in attendance, and the ready rope was there. A deputation of the elders made a last appeal to the officer, and begged mercy for the man; but there was no sign of relenting, and then one of them stepped forward and said: "Sahib, in your country do they hang people for offences committed in another country, and against another government?" The execution did not take place: the prisoner was remanded, and was afterwards deported to the Punjab, to be imprisoned till the end of the war.

The third is an incident of the Alikhel fight, and relates to a prisoner of war, a fine example of a fighting man who was true to his friends and brave to his enemies. He was an old man of the Mangal tribe, half moulla, half goatherd, of great stature and grand physique, with a voice like a trumpet, who established himself with about two hundred men, during the darkness, in a strong position close to the picquets, where the main attack was intended. He sheltered his party on the reverse side of a rise about 100 yards off, and began a steady, slow fire when daylight appeared. The men placed their matchlocks flush on the high ground above them and fired without exposing themselves. Behind, on the broken hillsides and in the

sheltered ravines, were from a thousand to twelve hundred men, instructed to follow the moulla's rush. He had declared his readiness to prove his supernatural and victorious powers by dashing at the three guns placed on a commanding position in the camp, and rendering them harmless by throwing his shaggy goat-skin mantle over their muzzles. This fanatic showed real military genius in devising a means of imbuing his men with courage and confidence to carry them straight for the strongest part of the camp. Had the supports closed up as he urged them to do by voice and gesture, there would have been wild work on that side of the camp. But they remained at too great a distance to enable the moulla leader to press home his attack. The crowds on the hillsides offered a target to the guns, and some well-directed shells made them scatter and creep to cover. Those in the ravines kept close too long, and in the end were caught in a counter-attack.

The moulla could see his supports hanging about, hesitating to come on, but believing in himself, he clung to his position, and waited to observe the effect of an attack which had been concerted to take place on the opposite side of the camp. I saw this from the three-gun battery, and as it demanded attention he was simply held in check until I had made certain of the safety of the camp on all sides. When the further attack had been repulsed, I let the troops go, and vigorous counter-attacks were made. The check to the moulla's party had cooled their ardour, yet they held their ground, and as it was seen that its nature protected them too well from our fire, a bayonet charge was suddenly made. The leader, conspicuous by his tall form and bold front, gallantly encouraged his men to stand and fight, but they gave way and ran, leaving over twenty of their number dead on the ground. The old moulla would have been bayoneted had not Mirak

Shah, the Afghan Governor who had remained faithful to his trust, and whose fighting instincts led him to accompany this charge, called out to him to throw down his arms and surrender. Seeing that all was lost he cast away his long sword-like knife, and, breathless from excitement and frantic shouting, sank to the ground, staring blankly at his captors.

When the fight and pursuit were over he was brought before me to be questioned regarding the rising. He knelt down silently, and removing his turban from his head placed it at my feet in sign of submission. When told to rise up he said in a quiet tone, "Sahib, I am your captive, spare my life." He had been surprised to find a friend when bullets and bayonets were dealing out death, and what he had afterwards heard gave him hope of mercy. He had been accustomed to preach and practise death and destruction to all enemies, and while he had not shrunk from meeting death in the furious bayonet charge, yet he gratefully accepted quarter; and now, on finding good where he believed only evil could exist, he began to view the "infidel English" in a very different light, and he asked for his life with a look in his face which showed that he knew it was safe. He was Gulnūr (the rose light), a moulla of the Mangal tribe, and said his congregation were so poor, that in order to make a living, he had to combine the labours of a goatherd with his profession of priest. He had never seen an Englishman before, and said he had been told that all English were heretics, and to kill one gave a passport to heaven. He mentioned this in a frank, simple manner by way of explaining why he was foremost in the fray. He gave some reliable general information concerning the hostile movement among the tribes, but declared his ignorance of its organisation and active leaders. I told him that he had fought well, that I had witnessed and admired his bravery, and that



it was not our custom to put simple prisoners of war to death.

The following day, when I enquired further from him regarding certain individuals, he affected not to understand, and merely said: "You promised me my life yesterday—yes, you did! You gave me my life, and I know you keep your word." I told him his life was quite safe, and there was no fear whatever of the promise being broken. Having become assured of this, he gave trivial information, but steadily declared that he had no knowledge of anything important. He showed most distinctly that he would not betray his companions or their cause, and it was impossible not to respect this rough champion of the Moslem faith, who was so true to his friends and brave to his enemies. He was kept a close prisoner, and appeared quite resigned while he remained in Alikhel, but on being told that he was to be deported to India till the war was over, he gave way to his feelings, and said that being an old man he would never see his native hills again. The dwellers in the cool mountain tracts of Afghanistan have the greatest dread of the heat of India in summer, and Gulnūr quite believed that it would kill him. He was sent away from Alikhel along with the horse thief, Sipahi, who also was sentenced to temporary banishment; and as a precaution against escape the two were handcuffed together. It was a strange coupling, the soldier-priest and the common thief, but it was necessary to take precautions against flight or rescue, for both had many friends and sympathisers on the watch ready to take advantage of any opportunity.

Afterwards at Kuram, where Gulnūr was detained pending arrangements for the further journey, I was haunted by his three sons, fine tall men, who came to try to ransom their father, offering Rs.200 for his liberty. On finding this impossible, they begged that one of

themselves might be taken in his place, pleading that, as he was an old man, and could not possibly live long in his own country even, the change to India would certainly kill him. It was explained to them that their father would be kindly treated in the cool northern part of the Punjab, where he was going until the war was over, and he would then be released. The sons had made extraordinary efforts to raise the money for the old man's ransom, and the fact of such a large sum as Rs.200 being collected among the desperately poor members of the moulla's congregation showed how strong the feeling was in his favour. The Mangals are quite the poorest as well as the wildest of the tribes in that quarter, and with them money has a very high value. The usual "blood money," when compensation for a life is accepted, is about Rs.50, so that they showed a high appreciation of Gulnür in the amount offered for his release. After a time Gulnür and Sipahi reached Rawal Pindi in the Punjab, and were there confined as simple prisoners. I did not forget the old goatherd-priest, and on the termination of the war I took steps to have him liberated and sent home; but I then learnt to my great regret that his presentiment had proved true, as he had died a short time before. Sipahi, the robber, lived to return, and tell of the end of gallant Gulnür.

I had the consolation of knowing that I did my best for the old man, and I think I may say that I saved him from a violent death at Alikhel under circumstances which to the Mahomedan mind mean peculiar degradation. A suggestion to hang the moulla was communicated to me from a superior officer, but there was no reason to inflict such a penalty, and I ignored it. I was the responsible authority; I knew what I was about when I settled the case, and no question of my right to act as I did, or concerning the justice of my decision, was ever raised.

## CHAPTER VIII

(1881-1887)

IN January 1881 a rising took place among the Sontals, a semi-civilised people inhabiting what is known as the Sontal Pergunnahs, about 200 miles north of Calcutta, where the coal mines are situated, and the Civil authorities, being unable to master it with the police at their disposal, asked for the assistance of a military force. Three regiments of Bengal and Madras infantry and two squadrons of Bengal cavalry were made available for this service, and I was named to command. The Sontals employ themselves in rude agriculture on jungle clearings, and as woodcutters, charcoal burners, and gatherers of forest produce; and on the opening up of the coal mines, they adapted themselves readily to an industry in which their women and children could take part. Five thousand men with their families were said to be thus employed when the rising took place, and there were fears that their knowledge of the use of explosives and crowbars would be applied to damaging the railway line to Calcutta.

The attention of the whole of India had been directed to the late Afghan war, and thousands of camp followers had been drawn from all parts of the country to the frontier and beyond, many of whom had returned to spread exaggerated reports which, in the re-telling, were wonderfully distorted. The traditional belief with the people is that women are the prizes of war most appreciated by soldiers, and the extravagantly

absurd rumour gained credit among the simple-minded Sontals, that as our troops had captured none from the Afghans, the Government was collecting women in India to give to them. The first general census of India was then being taken, and, suspicious at all times of a numbering of the people, the Sontals readily arrived at the conclusion that in the present instance it was connected with this rumour, more especially as the explanatory instructions issued by the local native authorities necessarily set forth that care was to be taken to distinguish between males and females, and special attention was drawn to the statement regarding age. The age question in census operations is generally a vexing one to the female mind, but in the present case the objections were not the usual sentimental ones. It was said that the word "dagh," which means mark, also scar, and brand, was used in the translated explanatory notes to signify the "star" which marked certain columns in the forms for special entries. Agitators, who are always ready in rural districts to gain importance and a living out of any popular excitement, went about explaining that the word "dagh" pointed to the branding of the women under a certain age for Government purposes, and it was understood that this was one of the causes of the rising.

There was no difficulty in restoring order when the troops arrived, and this was done without a shot being fired. I formed ten small columns of infantry, which marched and counter-marched through the whole district, the object being to show our power to the people. The punishment inflicted was in a form which deprived them of nothing of value in their idle state, for they had abandoned all work and were waiting on events. They were ordered to "hut" the troops at each camp with bush materials, and to cut grass and fodder for the horses and transport elephants. All

else was strictly paid for. Clever axemen as they are this punishment was light enough, nevertheless it had an excellent moral effect in every way, and served its purpose well.

In preparing for these operations it was seen that the great difficulty would be transport. Very little was known of the country and the roads, and the few carts to be obtained were ascertained to be of the most primitive type, with very limited carrying capacity. Accordingly elephants, which are best suited for jungle tracts, were recommended, and these were made available from the depots at Lucknow, Allahabad, Dinapur, and Barrackpur (Calcutta). Over sixty were collected at various points, and then the question arose as to the green forage which could be got for them. The fact was soon apparent that the Intelligence Department of the Army, which deals with information as to topography, statistics of supplies, etc., was at fault, having paid little attention to the Lower Bengal districts, while their energies were directed to other quarters. We had to work without their assistance, and found the country easier than was expected; excellent elephant fodder also was found in abundance in the foliage and young branches of the "banyan" (wild fig) trees, which were sufficiently abundant when actively sought for. All the "zemindars" (land proprietors) had elephants for their processional purposes, and these were sometimes pressed for temporary service, for their owners had not always been as loyal as their traditional duties, connected with their land holdings, demanded. All over Lower Bengal every great land-owner has an elephant to take him about his property, and to symbolise his power. In India the elephant always figures in the popular mind as the pomp which is inseparable from power. This duty occupied me five weeks, and I returned to Calcutta to find that the Adjutant-General had discovered the Presidency capital

to have fewer pleasures for him during my absence than when I was present; this meaning, as he said, that he had to work longer hours, early and late.

Six weeks after (April 1881), a similar rising took place among the Bhil tribes in Mewar, Rajputana, from the same cause—the census operations; and as I knew the country and the people well, the Viceroy sent for me to consult regarding a force of the Rajputana local troops to put it down, which at the same time I was asked to command. But as the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Donald Stewart had now relieved Sir Frederick Haines) and the Adjutant-General were against my going, nothing came of this. I lost nothing, however, as on aid being offered by the Rajput chiefs who had Bhil subjects, the excitement abated, and the movement of troops was countermanded.

I introduce here an incident at a shooting party near Simla this season (1881) to show how resourceful the native gamekeeper in India can be in the matter of “shooting tips.” In a previous chapter I have mentioned that Himalayan pheasants were to be found near Simla: they afforded fair sport to those who were prepared to work hard on the hillsides for moderate bags. Originally the shooting all round Simla was free, but latterly one of the Rajas had taken steps to preserve his game, and was able to show a good many birds at the autumn “shoots,” to which he used to invite his European friends. Having heard that the Viceroy was fond of shooting, he arranged to have a special drive of the wooded hillsides for him and a select party of visitors, including the Commander-in-Chief. As affecting the point of the story I am about to tell, I would mention that the Viceroy was a known cool and experienced shot.

It was a great honour to the Raja to entertain as his shooting guests the two “Lord Sahibs”—the

"Mulki Lat" (*lat* is the local rendering of *lord*) and the "Jungi Lat," the Civil and Military lords—and his dependents and retainers were fully alive to the chances of regal "tips." The "shoot" came off well, but in the final beat, which drew and drove down to the points where the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief were placed, a beater, when nearing the latter, was hit with a few pellets of shot. The chief shikari had a talk with the beater before he came forward to show his trivial hurts, of which, however, he made much, so as to get much rupee salve. It was known from what direction the shot had come, but the shrewd shikari had worked out in his mind all the probabilities and possibilities of the situation, and with well-feigned reluctance indicated another direction, that being where the Viceroy was standing during the beat. He knew well, as all natives know, that the Mulki Lat is far and away greater, and therefore richer, than the Jungi Lat, and accordingly, in the interests of all concerned—of whom he was undoubtedly "number one"—he showed a proper hesitation in saying that he was ashamed, but felt obliged to speak the truth!—*and then he didn't*. All the brotherhood were ready with their say to support him, for, in greedy anticipation, their hands were working to be in the bag of rupees, which, of course, were forthcoming to a liberal extent.

I was appointed Brigadier-General and posted to the Rawal Pindi Brigade in October 1882. The Brigade was a large one during the drill season, consisting of five batteries of Royal Artillery, one regiment British cavalry, two regiments British infantry, one regiment native cavalry, two regiments native infantry, and one company sappers and miners; and this gathering made life very pleasant at Rawal Pindi. There was also the Murree hill-station to go to for change in the hot weather, and I took advantage

of the opportunity of being so near Kashmir, to pay the "happy valley" another visit. In this year, 1883, I was gazetted to receive as a "reward for distinguished and meritorious service, a good service pension of £100 per annum."

In May 1884, I was transferred to the superior command of the Rohilkand district as a Brigadier-General of the first class, my twin brother, who had been posted to the Multan Brigade three weeks after I was appointed to the Rawal Pindi one, succeeding me in the latter. I joined my new command at Bareilly (the district head-quarters), a lovely station within a few hours' journey of the cool Himalayas. The district then had within its limits six military stations, three of them in the plains, and three in the hills, which allowed of pleasant and frequent change. Having the extensive wooded belt along the foot of the hills very near, Bareilly was a great central depot for commissariat elephants, which browsed and fed in the forest, and were brought into the station from time to time for inspection. During the visit of the military member of the Viceroy's Council (who has to do with the commissariat and other departments), between thirty and forty elephants were paraded for him to see, and one patriarch was pointed out as quite useless from great age. He was a magnificent-looking animal, and was said to have taken part in most of the important State processions and ceremonials for quite half a century. The departmental officer in charge stated that he had been under treatment a long time for internal strain, caused by his load of tents becoming excessive owing to rain and mud at a camp of exercise, and that a Veterinary Committee having condemned him to be destroyed, as being beyond recovery, it had been decided to poison him. This was sanctioned, and the old elephant was led away by his mahout. He might well have been



allowed to range the forest with the rest of the herd, but that, of course, meant the expense of a mahout (keeper) and liberal etceteras, and as the Commissariat Department had no margin for old age pensions or compassionate allowances for elephants, the faithful old servant was to die. It was better than being sold, however, as was often the fate of elephants when no longer fit for hard work. I kept a note of some pathetic lines which were published in the *Pioneer* on the reverie of a female elephant, named "Pouchall," whose sale by auction at the Lucknow Transport Office had been posted up. The elephant sees the notice on the well, where she is taken to drink, and with the "tongue of its condition," as the Orientals express it, says:—

"What's this notice posted here  
On the well—  
Who can tell?  
Will there be a Russian war,  
Or is it for a grand durbar?  
Come Mahout,  
What's it all about?  
A female elephant for sale!  
Nay—who—who?  
Tell me true  
Not—'Pouchall,' Oh to think of it!  
Leave the well—I cannot drink of it!  
Just now 'twas day, dear old *Mahout*  
How dark it gets—the sun's put out!"

There were several other verses, and they ended thus:—

" . . . Ah well!  
Elephants, men—we all get old—  
I never heard that men were sold!"

The elephant I have mentioned, whose death by poison was decreed, died suddenly, just as the arrangements were being made to poison him. About mid-day, in the elephant lines, when all were alert, looking for the mid-day feed, he suddenly threw up his trunk,

trumpeted a shrill blast, and fell forward dead; something internal had happened which put a sudden end to his life. The mahouts declared that he had heard what was said about his death, knew what was ordered, and would not wait for others to do painfully what he could do painlessly, without troubling any one.

We know that the mahout has a firm belief in his elephant's understanding being as good as a man's, the only difference being want of speech. As an instance of this there is an old story from the "Elephant Lines," illustrating how an elephant indicated plainly by an act, at a periodical superior inspection of the food supply, what his want of speech prevented him doing by word. When the elephants are kept in cantonments they get a daily ration of flour, coarse sugar, and rancid butter, in addition to fodder. Mahouts are known to partake of this ration to a small extent just as the syce pilfers some of the horses' gram (pulse), which, when parched, makes a palatable addition to his flour cakes. In this instance the mahout was in the habit of exceeding the amount of pilfering sanctioned by general usage, and the elephant saw and knew by comparisons that he was being badly treated. He felt acutely that he had a real grievance, and evidently thought out a means of bringing it to the notice of the inspecting officer. When this official passed down the line of elephants, looking at their general appearance and examining the food, the elephant, in his presence, divided his pile of flour cakes into two portions with his trunk, and placed one portion in front of the mahout. The meaning could not possibly be misunderstood: an enquiry followed, and the mahout was dismissed.

The superior intelligence of the elephant, however, sometimes has the disadvantage of making it a victim to "nerves." In fact the elephant may be called a very nervous animal. It is ludicrous to see one

alarmed at even the smallest dog running harmlessly behind it: the great massive creature shuffles along hurriedly, looking back uneasily, and trying to turn out of the way of the little thing that is frightening it. Although elephants are quite an institution in tiger-hunting, it is only the exceptional ones with strong nerves which can be trusted to stand a tiger's charge, and even the best of these sometimes give way to disordered nerves at a critical moment, and bring shame on their keen, sporting mahouts. What are known as the "pad" elephants, used in driving dense jungle, are generally more or less unsteady: they find courage in numbers just as men do.

I have previously mentioned a case of a steady hunting elephant being suddenly terror-struck at the sight of a tiger, and the following is another instance of this which happened when I was at Bareilly. The Commissioner of the Division had a tiger-shooting party in the jungles near that station, and there being two ladies in his camp who were most desirous to see the exciting sport, it was arranged that advantage should be taken of the first safe opportunity. When the chance came, the ladies were put on the steadiest elephant in the camp, a tried animal at tigers, which could be trusted, it was thought, to face any danger. When they arrived at the jungle where the tiger was marked down, the precaution was taken of putting the ladies on the side of the drive where the ground was comparatively open, as that was supposed to be the safest place. It so happened that the tiger slipped out unobserved there, and most unexpectedly came face to face with their elephant, which was so startled that it turned and fled at its fastest pace, a rapidly shuffling and excruciatingly jolting step. (I have had experience of this myself on a runaway elephant.) The elephant, mad with fear, became at once completely beyond the mahout's control, and, heedless of cries and blows, rushed away aimlessly

in the wildest alarm, with all his intelligence and habits of obedience gone. There was nothing for it but to hold on, and hope for him to slacken his pace, when he might be induced to listen to the mahout. At last a reed and thatch hut-hamlet was seen, and the elephant fortunately went towards it, when the sight of human beings seemed to reassure him a little, so that the mahout was able to make him kneel. He told the ladies to get down immediately, as he felt uncertain of the palpitating elephant. They just managed to descend in time, for the elephant, again overcome by terror and nerves, was up and away at a headlong pace, the mahout, however, contriving to slip off as it started. The tiger and the elephant had fled from each other in mutual fear, and the former, on being headed, went back to the jungle and was eventually killed. This occupied some time, and then enquiry was made for the ladies. As they could not be found, it was surmised that they had returned to the camp, and a messenger was sent there to ascertain. When it became known that they were not in the camp a wide search was made, and at last the mahout was met returning to tell what had happened, and the gentlemen of the party went to bring in the ladies. They had remained in the village with the native servant who had been with them on the elephant, and who had done all that was possible for their comfort. The unhappy elephant, after roaming about for some hours, was also recovered.

My friend, Sir Alfred Lyall, who had been Foreign Secretary, was now Lieutenant-Governor of the North-western Provinces, and as his summer head-quarters were at Naini Tal, which was also my place of residence for three months of the hot season, I had many opportunities of meeting him there. In December 1884 he invited me to meet the Viceroy and Lady Dufferin, who were then visiting him at Lucknow, one of his provincial places of residence. It had been arranged

that the Viceroy should see the veteran survivors of the loyal and faithful native soldiers who served with the British garrison in the Residency there, during its investment by the mutineers and rebels in 1857. These men proved in a brilliant manner their unswerving fidelity and devoted bravery, and rendered splendid services. On all special occasions, the survivors of that band of native heroes, who may be within easy journey, and able to travel, are summoned to Lucknow to see and be seen. Those are always occasions of joy and satisfaction to them, and care is taken that they return to their homes with generous proof of the fullest appreciation of their fine example of loyalty and courage.

Lord Dufferin, unfortunately, had contracted slight fever at Lucknow, and was unable to review these veterans, but Lady Dufferin undertook to see them, and communicate a kind and complimentary message from the Viceroy; and I accompanied Her Excellency in my capacity as Honorary Aide-de-Camp. The duty was most gracefully performed by Her Excellency, and the veterans were highly pleased. As we passed down their line I noticed one man wearing, suspended round his neck, a medal, much rubbed away, but showing an unusual design. The wearer was very old and listless-looking, and was clothed in a faded artillery uniform of blue cotton cloth. When I spoke to him he brightened up and tried to tell me his military history. But he mouthed his words so that I could not understand him, and then I saw that he was absolutely toothless. He had a lad, however, with him, who was delighted to act as interpreter, and I learnt that he had been in the artillery of the "Kumpani Bahadur" (Honourable East India Company), and he laid great stress on being a "golundaz" of the artillery, not a "drabé." The first is Hindustani for gunner, the second is a native corruption of driver.

The field artillery of those days had guns dragged by bullocks, and he did not wish to be confounded with a bullock driver—often called a “tail-twister,” as that describes the usual means by which the patient ox is urged to move smartly. I had to listen to all this before I could open my enquiry as to the old medal worn round his neck; but when we came to that his animation and gestures showed how proud he was to tell about it. At close fighting during the investment he had killed his man, and took the medal off *his* neck. As far as I could make out during my rapid look, it was the medal for the campaigns against the Mahrattas in the first quarter of the last century, and he regarded it as a talisman. I told him that he had good right to wear it as the spoil of the enemy, and hoped it would give him luck and long life to enjoy his pension for many many years, on which he saluted me with a long grin of great satisfaction.

In March 1885 I was deputed by Lord Dufferin to proceed to the Afghan frontier to meet the Amir, Abdul Rahman Khan, and accompany him to Rawal Pindi for the meeting between them there. I found this duty to be most interesting and agreeable in every way. My knowledge of Persian enabled me to make many friends among the Afghans, and to understand clearly many things which otherwise would have been but matters for conjecture or superficial observation. The Amir was clever and loquacious, and gave me favourable opportunities of studying how we stood with the Afghans and himself. He seemed to appreciate having a listener like myself (for he had previously asked about my travels in Central Asia) to converse with, and on the evening of his arrival at Jumrud, near Peshawar, he spoke much about his flight from Afghanistan in 1868, when his cousin, Sher Ali, became undisputed Amir. We sat outside his tent looking towards the Peshawar valley, then covered with rich crops. He spoke of the

fertile, well-inhabited plains of India which lay before us, and said he was glad to have the opportunity to see them. He mentioned his wanderings in the Waziri country when fleeing from Sher Ali, and said he had received an invitation to visit British territory, but as we had then established friendly relations with Sher Ali, he thought it wiser not to accept it, although he knew that he would have the same honourable and liberal treatment that the British Government invariably gives to princes of fallen fortune. His mind was evidently dwelling with great satisfaction on his altered circumstances, in that he was now visiting India as an independent sovereign prince and a royal guest, for he had been made fully acquainted with all the preparations to give him a splendid reception, and he had already been saluted in ceremonial regal style. I heard that on the journey down he had talked much about his coming reception, evidently speculating in his mind if it would be a kingly one, and as good as that given to Sher Ali. He may have imagined that as the British Government had helped to place him on the throne, there might be an inclination to regard him as less of an independent Amir than Sher Ali, who won his way to power without our aid.

It may be as well to recount here that Abdul Rahman, the eldest son of Sher Ali's eldest brother, Afzul, had, by his military genius, won the throne of Kabul for his father in 1865, and kept it for him till his death in 1867, when Azim, his father's full brother, succeeded, and whom Abdul Rahman continued to serve faithfully as Commander-in-Chief. The accession of both of these brothers to the Kabul throne was formally recognised by the Government of India. But the ex-Amir, Sher Ali, in the meanwhile was strengthening himself in Turkistan for another attempt to recover the throne, and he successfully advanced on Kandahar and Kabul in 1868. The Amir

Azim, and his nephew, Abdul Rahman, suffered a crushing defeat in the end of the year, and sought safety in flight. It was then that they went towards the frontier of India with the intention of taking refuge there, but afterwards in uncertainty they turned towards Persia, where, after many months of wandering, they found honourable asylum. Azim died there, and Abdul Rahman journeyed on by way of Khiva and Bokhara to Samarkand, where he was hospitably received by the Russians, and remained as their honoured guest for eleven years, until he returned to Kabul in 1880 as Amir.

I had to judge regarding the Amir by his manner and expression as well as by his words. I do not think his anxiety regarding his reception had so much to do with his own feelings as with the probable effect on others; and those others were in Samarkand and Tashkend. He had been in comparative poverty there, and had to face slight from Russian, Afghan, and Usbeg acquaintances, and he was anxious that these people should hear of the honour shown to him by a nation second to none in the world. For as soon as he had been apprised of the splendid arrangements made for his reception, his thoughts seemed at once to carry him back to those dark days in Samarkand, and he made a rapid calculation as to how soon the news would travel there by wire *via* England, Russia, and Turkistan. His remark, delivered with great satisfaction at Jumrud, was, "My arrival and the manner of my reception will be known in Samarkand in thirty-six hours." So absorbed was he with this subject that in the evening of that day he plainly showed he had been again calculating the time it would take for the news to reach the people of Samarkand, as he said, "They will hear the news some hours earlier than I thought."

I will not go into the details of the Amir's arrival



at Peshawar and at Rawal Pindi, of his first meeting with Lord Dufferin, and of the great durbar at which he made his public declaration of alliance with England, but will merely mention a few incidents at that time of which I have personal knowledge. It was evident that the subject of the Amir's speech at the durbar was previously discussed with his Sirdars, and that they had been in a state of anxious expectation as to the declaration of alliance with England. I gathered this from what was said in my presence at the close of the durbar. As I entered a carriage with the Afghan Commander-in-Chief and the Dabir-ul-Mulk (Home Secretary), the former, in the noise of closing the door, said with a great look of eagerness and satisfaction, "I feel happy now." This was the first opportunity they had of speaking on the subject, and in the excitement of the moment, they appeared quite unconscious of my presence. I mention this to show that the alliance with England was popular, and I think it is so still.

There can be no doubt that great efforts were made to prevent the Amir carrying out his visit to India. The subject was much discussed in open court at Kabul, and the Russian party there was not backward in telling what was said at Tashkend about it. The Amir told me that he had personally heard from Samarkand of the surprise and annoyance shown by the Russian General there at his going to India; and that it had been said he would be deceived by the English, and evil, not good, would result to him. It would almost seem that while the Amir was enjoying in his mind the idea of the news of his splendid reception in India creating a sensation in Samarkand, the Russians were preparing a surprise for him, to produce a dramatic effect throughout Afghanistan, which would enhance their prestige and lower his, as well as that of the British Government. He

reached Jumrud on 29th March, Peshawar 30th, and Rawal Pindi 31st.

He and the Viceroy exchanged visits the following day, and on the evening of that day, a telegram from his representative (Kazi Saat-ud-Din) with General Sir Peter Lumsden's boundary commission, near Herat, dated 28th March, was forwarded to him from Meshed, through the Foreign Office. Being written in English, I was asked to read and translate it to him. It was to the effect that a Russian General, with a force of eight hundred infantry and six hundred cavalry, and more infantry and artillery following, had taken up a threatening position opposite Panjdeh, and that the Afghan Naib Salar (Deputy-Governor) and the General, Ghaus-ed-Din, had entrenched the post and were determined to defend it. The Amir received this report very calmly, and said: "Of course they will defend their post. Your newspapers are always saying that I am too friendly to the Russians. Now we shall see: the Afghans will certainly fight the Russians, for this movement on their part is unprovoked; they are seeking for war."

By a most remarkable coincidence, the startling news of the post being taken, with heavy loss to the Afghans, was communicated to the Amir by a telegram (which I read to him) from the same official with the boundary commission, on the evening of the day, 8th April, that he made his declaration of alliance with England at the great durbar in Rawal Pindi. There was all the appearance of studied cause and effect in this incident taking place while the British commission to settle the boundary question between Russia and Afghanistan was on the spot, and the Amir was a kingly guest in the Viceroy's camp in India. When I read the second telegram to him, he said bitterly: "This is Russian friendship, is it? Is killing several hundreds of my men, and wounding my General, a sign of their

friendship?" This unjustifiable attack roused public opinion in England to a point approaching war, but the Amir was earnest in his expressed wish that the Afghans should first be allowed to meet invasion without external military assistance. He is understood to have begged that not one British soldier should cross the frontier until aid was asked. An Afghan of note said: "Let them shed their blood; the nation will then be roused to revenge, and your opportunity will come. Do not rush hastily into Afghanistan unasked. Prepare and wait." This was the key-note of Abdul Rahman's policy.

A few days later, the Amir showed me a letter which he had just then received from Sirdar Abdullah Jan Khan, Governor of Badakhshan, forwarding a letter to himself from the Russian Governor of the Zarafshan district, Samarkand. The letter from the latter was written in Turki, and said that the Russian Government desired to be on the most friendly terms with the Amir Abdul Rahman, and in the matter of the boundary towards Herat, it would be well for the Amir to admit that the whole of the Saryk Turkomans were beyond Afghan limits, and in no way subject to Afghanistan; that it was desired to avoid disputes with the Amir, and to prevent any one from giving him trouble (this had reference to rival claimants for the Kabul throne). The Amir explained that he had been intimate with the writer at Samarkand, and used to play chess with him, and accompany him out shooting. He again made bitter remarks on Russian friendship, and said that, not content with the unprovoked attack at Panjdeh, they now expected him to give up subjects and territory. He went on to say: "I have been considering all this very deeply: without war now there cannot be real peace; the time for action has come, and I am preparing to act. If the quarrel is not settled now, it will be a much more serious one

for us later." This view, I think, was quite correct. We know that English public opinion was in favour of disputing by force of arms the Russian advance on the Afghan frontier, and a Liberal Government had obtained a war credit of ten million sterling; and with the Afghans asking our assistance we would have been in a position to organise their forces so as to make them very efficient auxiliaries. Remembering that the time was twenty years ago, when they had not consolidated their power in Trans-Caspia, the Russians might then have received a check that would have affected their policy of expansion in Central Asia for a considerable time; and had our troops appeared in Afghanistan as invited friends and welcome allies, the gain would undoubtedly have been great in obliterating old animosities and facilitating future plans for the defence of India.

I accompanied the Amir on his return journey to Lundi Khana at the farther end of the Khyber pass. The tribesmen came in greater numbers to see him on his way back than when he passed down, which showed that his splendid reception in India had increased his prestige. His last camp was at Lundi Kotal, on the top of the pass, 4 miles from his own border. There was a very large concourse of tribesmen there to see him, and among them a great number of Shinwaris, a tribe which holds lands on both sides of the border. At that time there was considerable enmity on the part of the Afghan Shinwaris towards the Amir's officials and troops, owing to recent hostilities, and there was an idea that possibly some of them, from a feeling of revenge, might attempt the life of the Amir while within the British border. It was noticed when nearing the camp that the Shinwaris were in great numbers at one place, lining the path along which we were riding, and that the Amir would pass within a few yards of them. They were

all fully armed, many of them with breech-loading rifles, and all stood motionless, without a sound or sign of welcome or respect. Some of the Amir's troopers placed themselves between him and the Shinwaris, but he waved them aside, and rode down their front, looking them straight in the face with an expression of calm curiosity. When near the end of the line, a tall old man of spare, athletic figure, carrying a Martini rifle, who seemed to regard the Amir more keenly than the others, raised his voice loud in welcome and admiration, "Salam alaikim" (Peace be to thee), on which the whole crowd shouted out the same salutation, and the Amir gave them the friendly response, "Va alaikim a' salâm" (And to you be peace). It was a relief to us to hear this hearty, "Pass friend. All's well."

I took leave of the Amir the next morning, and he then pinned on my breast his Barakzai diamond star, and the golden order of "Hurmat" (honour) which he had worn at the Rawal Pindi Durbar, and also presented me with a black Arab horse, to use, as he said, "in the service of England and Afghanistan." This was an allusion to my hope of being actively employed with the Afghan troops. The Commander-in-Chief, Gholam Hyder Khan, whispered to me when he said his good-bye, "I am always your friend; count on me," and many of the other Sirdars called out to me their friendly farewell. Much was said to me in long messages and last words from the Amir to communicate to the Viceroy at Simla, and when all was done, Lord Dufferin asked me if I thought Abdul Rahman would accept me as British Envoy at Kabul. I said that if the expected war broke out, doubtless he would, in connection with a special war subsidy; and this would probably have come to pass had hostilities commenced.

I rejoined my District command at Bareilly on

1st May 1885. I had a very pleasant military picnic time—10th December 1885 to 27th January 1886—at the great field manœuvres which closed at Delhi in a fine show of troops, and which, I believe, greatly impressed the representatives sent from the armies of Europe and the United States of America.

In 1886 practical effect was given to a proposal for summer camps in the hills, as an experiment for the acclimatisation during their first year's service in India of young soldiers who might be considered unlikely to keep their health during the hot season. These men were to be in addition to the usual number sent each year to the various convalescent depots at the hill-stations. Curiously enough, of late years there had been a disinclination on the part of the men to accept the change from the hot plains to the cool hills, by going to these depots. To such an extent had this disinclination increased, that the "Fitzwygram" (Colonel Sir Frederick Fitzwygram's endowment) Himalayan summer homes for a certain number of men and non-commissioned officers of British cavalry, which were built at Ranikhet, were practically unoccupied in 1885, and as, under the "Trust" as it stood, they could only be used for that branch of the service, the necessary legal and other steps had to be taken to open them to the Royal Artillery; and even then, such partial success attended the extension of the privilege that the advisability was being considered of making them available for British infantry also. Since regimental institutes had been established on a better basis, and made more comfortable and convenient, and the conditions of life in barracks generally had been improved, it was found that the men preferred the regimental home in the plains to the sanatorium in the hills. And this being the case, the young soldiers were equally pleased with their regimental life and its bazar sur-

roundings, and the same, if not greater difficulty was experienced in getting them to regard favourably a change to tents in the hills. However, the experiment was to be made, and a camp was formed at a hill-station within my command to accommodate from three to four hundred young soldiers. Only one regiment in the Rohilkand district sent a detachment to the camp, and for the purposes of discipline and administration, the Colonel denuded a company of as many of its seasoned soldiers as vacancies were required, and filled it up with late arrivals, so that they were under experienced non-commissioned officers. I may here say that this was the best behaved company in the camp. The other companies were not so formed, and accordingly their discipline was lax, and conduct not good.

There was little for the men to do, and groups of the "baser sort" formed themselves into card and illicit drink clubs, which naturally produced irregularities and absences on duties and at roll calls. The composition of the camp brought men under non-commissioned officers not belonging to the same regiments, and these young soldiers, in their folly, sometimes confused a false idea of *esprit de corps* with their desire to set lawful authority at defiance, and affected to resent the interference, as they called it, of a stranger non-commissioned officer. There was one serjeant in particular, whom they knew as a man of strong character, who did his duty fearlessly, and him they used to anathematise freely and frequently. The idea grew that he should be removed in some way or other, and at last, at a full meeting of a particular group, it was agreed that he should be shot by one of their number to be decided by lot, and on further discussion it was suggested, that as they had cards, the "fatal card," the ace of spades, should decide. The pack was shuffled, every one

taking a hand in this, and then the deal commenced. The card fell to a young soldier who did not belong to the serjeant's regiment, and in the afternoon of the same day he committed the deed of murder.

On that particular day the camp was in a most disorderly state, a number of men being drunk, and this accounted for the murder not being known at once. The serjeant was sitting on his cot with his coat off, drinking a cup of tea in a tent, the side walls of which on one side were raised for ventilation purposes, and the murderer, having taken a rifle (not his own) from an adjoining tent, and two cartridges from another, approached him from behind, and shot him through the back, death being almost immediate. He then replaced the rifle unobserved, as he thought, and disappeared. The sound of the shot was probably deadened in the interior of the tent, and the murder was not known at once. Little by little evidence was forthcoming, and by the evening the suspected man was arrested. His first act was to ask to see the chaplain of the camp (a late arrival in India), who was well known to all the men from the more than usual kindly personal interest he took in them. He was at that time absent for a few days, fishing in the neighbourhood, and on this being known, the man either wrote, or had a letter written to him, on receipt of which the chaplain returned to the camp, and had a private interview with the man. When the full preliminary enquiry had been completed, arrangements were made for the man's trial by general Court-martial; and at the same time the chaplain engaged, at his own expense, an English barrister for the defence, and himself assisted, so far as he could, as the prisoner's friend at the trial.

The proceedings of a general Court-martial have



to be confirmed at Army Head-quarters before they are promulgated, and for a sentence of death, confirmation by the Head of the Government is necessary. There was considerable delay in this instance, and in the meanwhile the summer camp was broken up, and its late occupants had left to rejoin their respective regiments before the confirmed proceedings were received. An effort had been made by letter, anonymous or otherwise, to induce the Commander-in-Chief to regard the case as one for leniency, owing to extenuating circumstances in connection with the ace of spades incident which, it was urged, made the murder a matter of chance or an unpremeditated act. The origin of this letter or communication was very evident. It was through the enquiries, quietly conducted after receipt of this letter, that the particulars here given of what probably took place previous to the murder, were made known as common talk in the camp. There appears to have been no doubt of the murder having been discussed by several, but the truth of the story about "the ace of spades" could not be established, not that it would have affected the justice of the verdict. The evidence against the prisoner was clear and conclusive, and it was manifestly in the interests of justice, and specially of discipline, that the sentence should take effect.

A senior officer who happened to visit the station in the hills where the trial took place, on hearing of the chaplain taking such a very prominent part in the defence, which was, inferentially, that the accused had not committed the murder, remarked that he must have known of the man's guilt, and how was it possible for him to satisfy his conscience, and to preach to the men "Thou shalt do no murder?" This was repeated to the chaplain, who was understood to say, that his horror at the idea of being present at an execution was such that he exerted himself to

the utmost to avoid the dreadful duty. He was under the impression that in the event of a conviction the death sentence would be carried out at the place where the crime was committed. But owing to the delay in confirming the proceedings, the troops had left, and as the example of the punishment was for the murderer's comrades of his own regiment who had been in the summer camp, the sentence was carried out at the regimental station in the plains. We hardly ever hear of soldiers or sailors implicating comrades in their crimes, and in this instance nothing was revealed, though it was said for the prisoner, that one of the two men, whose rifle and cartridges he was stated to have taken, had committed the deed. The night before his execution, the condemned man asked to see the officer who had, in due course of duty, acted as public prosecutor in the case, and told him that there were men in the regiment who would "do for him" within a week of his death: needless to say nothing of the kind was ever attempted.

While enjoying the pleasant cool climate and the pretty lake scenery of Naini Tal, I was, in the height of the summer heat, transferred to the hottest station on the Bengal side of India, Allahabad, to command for a time the Division which has its head-quarters there. A bad outbreak of cholera in the station prevented me taking my leave of absence in July, and thus I had, for my last year in India, an unusually long spell of very hot weather; but it did me no harm, and I was able to remain to the last in good and strong health. I availed myself of my leave of absence in September, and went to Kharwara, in Rajputana, to visit my friend, Colonel Arthur Conolly, who had succeeded to the command of the Mewar Bhil regiment there. He and I went to Udaipur as guests of the political Resident,

Colonel Charles Euan Smith,<sup>1</sup> and while there we were witnesses of a most remarkable scene that took place in the verandah of the Residency, when a report was made of a recent human sacrifice in the neighbourhood.

Briefly told, the story was that a Brahman village, belonging to the Udaipur state, had passed some time before into the possession of the adjoining Tonk state, by an interchange of detached villages, with a view to simplifying boundary matters, and thus the Brahmans found themselves with a Mahomedan over-lord instead of a Hindu one. The village had been granted in perpetuity to the Brahmans by a former Maharana of Udaipur, and the fact was duly recorded on a copper tablet, which is the form of title-deed in those parts. The grant, of course, was a religious one, after the manner of Church grants, but a nominal fee of Rs.12 was paid annually to the State for protection. After passing into the possession of the Mahomedan state, Tonk, the new authorities demanded payment of the regular land revenues, and from time to time an assessment upon the crops was made, which at last amounted to Rs.500 annually. Successive deputations of the villagers proceeded for four years to Tonk to lay their case before the Durbar (Court) there, but without effect. The Copper Deed was shown, but their petition was rejected. A few weeks previously, upon the ripening of the rain crops, the usual tax collectors came to assess the village, and it soon became known to the Brahmans that there was absolutely no hope of any remission of their burden. Some differences had arisen between the revenue assessors and the villagers, and the feelings of the latter were evidently strained to the highest pitch of despair, for on the morning that the measurement of the crops commenced the Brahmans assembled, and it was decided by all present—women

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Sir Charles Euan Smith, K.C.B., C.S.I.

as well as men—that there was nothing left for them to do to move the Durbar, except the awful sacrifice of life, known as *Johur*. The object of *Johur* is best illustrated by the scriptural quotation: “It is good that one should die for the people.” Three men and four women presented themselves to be burnt as *willing* sacrifices; but the women would not hear of any man dying, and it was decided that the sacrifice should be confined to the four women. The wood and flax were collected and the pyre prepared immediately this resolution was taken, and the victims had selected themselves for death. At the last moment two of the women became frightened and withdrew, no opposition whatever being offered. The other two went bravely to their death. Just as the flames commenced to envelop them they exhibited the most extraordinary courage, for, addressing the bystanders, they asked them to call their sons to cut off their hands before they were consumed, and to send them to the proper tribunals as proofs of the occurrence, for otherwise, they said, it might be believed that their ashes were not mingled with those of the burnt wood. The sons, who were present, at once stepped forward, the hands were held out, and three were cut off. A few minutes later the women were sacrificed. All this happened about mid-day, and in the space of two hours. The revenue officials of Tonk were engaged in measuring the crops at the time, and on hearing of the preparations for the *Johur*, they fled.

The villagers presented themselves at Udaipur, bringing the charred hands with them in conformity with the wishes of the unfortunate victims. They came to the Residency to supplicate the Supreme Government, which to them represented something mysterious but all-powerful, to ensure a revival of their old privileges. They were accompanied by some of the Maharana's officials, and on a sign they

uncovered the poor charred hands, and reverently laid them on a piece of cloth on the ground before us. We felt deep sympathy with them in their distress, and the Maharana's officials declared that the utmost would be done to remedy the wrong which had driven them to this dreadful act of despair. I wrote an account of this at the time, which appeared in the *Pioneer*, my object being to draw such attention to it, that it should not be dealt with as a crime, and, moreover, to stimulate the native governments concerned in their expressed good intentions.

The following day the Maharana's officials, with the object probably of diverting our minds from the terribly sad story of the Brahman village, mentioned that His Highness had at that time as an honoured guest at his court, a Brahman from Benares who had the most wonderful memory ever known to them, and it was proposed that he should give us an exhibition of his powers. A visit to the Residency was arranged, and other English gentlemen then in Udaipur, and some Rajput gentlemen of the place, were invited to be present. The Brahman, known as Galtu Lal, Maharaj, came, accompanied by a friend. He was of medium height, spare in body and ascetic in appearance, with a quiet look of self-possession and quick apprehension. It was arranged that ten of us, five European, five native gentlemen, should each write out a sentence of five to ten words in the following languages and dialects—Greek, Latin, French, English, Scots (Burns), Sanscrit, Persian, Urdu, Guzerati, and Bhil. Each word was numbered, and Galtu Lal began by asking each of us the name of the language, the number of words in the sentence, and to speak the sentence slowly. His next step was to ask each person for any word he chose of his sentence, and its number: this word he repeated till he got the pronunciation as near as possible. In this manner he proceeded with his

enquiries, telling each person as he passed on to the next how many words there were left to complete his sentence.

When about half-way through the exercise he invited us to question him on any subject, with the view of distracting his mind from what had just engaged it; among other things he was asked his opinion regarding the spirits of the dead having knowledge of what was passing in this world, and he said that no doubt the spirits of certain chosen ones were privileged to know what would give them pleasure. Regarding the moon being inhabited, he thought that as the varied features of its surface appeared to indicate the existence of land and water, it was reasonable to suppose that it resembled our earth, and might contain human beings and animal life. After this he proceeded with the exercise of memory; as each sentence was completed, he named the language, repeated the words in their regular order according to numbers, and also gave them in the order in which they were first chosen. In no instance did he make a mistake, and the pronunciation was remarkably good. Thoroughly pleased with his success, he proceeded to further proof of memory. He said: "Give me the language and the number and I will tell you the word." This was done quickly and accurately. He then added: "Give me the word and the language and I will give you the number; or give me the word and I will tell you the language." He was invariably correct. We conversed in Hindustani, a language which we all knew well.

Being asked the next day to witness a combat between a tiger and a wild boar, we went to the Maharana's menagerie grounds outside the city, where the preparations had been made. A great cage, firm and secure in every way, was placed against a long building with trap-doors leading into it from the divisions which held the animals. The boar was first

turned in—a fine savage-looking animal, active, alert, and bristling with angry suspicion; he walked about the cage in a restless manner, scenting danger, and when the tiger was let in he retreated into a corner, and stood on his guard. The tiger was a full-grown beast, and had purposely been kept on short allowance of food so as to stimulate his hunger and provoke his ferocity, but the sight of the boar had the very evident effect of fear, causing him to retreat into the furthest corner, where he crouched and watched. The two looked at one another for some minutes, and then the boar walked out and stood in the middle of the cage, evidently challenging the tiger to fight, which, however, he declined to do, trying, on the contrary, to sink lower to the ground, and to press closer to the bars of the cage, clearly showing a strong desire to avoid contact. All attempts to rouse the tiger having failed, the trap-door was raised and he swiftly fled. This in a way confirmed what I had heard from native hunters of the full-grown wild boar being sometimes more than a match for the tiger, when not taken unawares. One of them told me that he and others had found the remains of a tiger and a boar which had evidently fought to the death, the signs showing the tiger to have died first, the boar going away some distance before he fell to his deadly hurts. They thought the tiger had attacked the “sounder” party of pigs which the boar was with, and that he struck first in defence of his family.

*À propos* of this discomfiture of the flesh-devouring tiger by the vegetarian boar, I lately saw in the papers a police report, in which a burglar, being interrupted in his operations, escaped from the house he had entered, but was pursued and captured by the occupant. After disposing of the case, the magistrate complimented the householder on his bold capture single-handed, whereupon, becoming garrulous, he told

the court that while strong and active, yet he was a vegetarian. On hearing this the powerful burglar turned on him with a look of disgust at having allowed himself to be taken by him, and said: "Had 'a known that, a'd ha' knocked your—— head off." Such is the popular belief in beef!

From Udaipur I went to Kharwara, as Conolly's guest, to see my old regiment, the Mewar Bhil corps, which I had left nine years before. At the festivities and sports in honour of my visit the Bhil women and girls were in great evidence, and a race for them brought some fine specimens of slim, trim, good runners to the starting-post. There was great enthusiasm shown in this race, the women in their eagerness to win clutching at their rivals when they bunched together and tearing their scanty coverings to a condition which caused much merriment. There was such difficulty in deciding this race, for all with one voice claimed to be first, that in the end it had to be regarded as a case of all prizes and no blanks, each getting a small payment.

I visited an old friend in the neighbourhood, His Highness the Maharawal of Dungurpur, a chief of long pedigree, coeval with Udaipur, who has many Bhil subjects, and whose strong attitude on our side during the Bhil rising of 1881, which I have before mentioned, helped materially to put it down. He had pitched a most comfortable camp for us by the side of the lovely lake at his capital, and everything was done in excellent style. We sat down to a capital dinner, at which our Rajput host made the champagne flow freely. There was a fine firework display over the lake after dinner, followed by Bhil sports and dances, the active Bhil women taking a prominent part. The Maharawal at the end handed round rupees among them very liberally. He seemed to be on the best of terms with them all, and when I remarked on this



to him, he said: "Sometimes I beat them, sometimes I caress them—all depends on their behaviour." He showed us his new "water palace," a very beautiful building with fine stone carvings, proving that the fine old Indian art still lives. A mason of Dungurpur was the architect, and his work pronounced him a true artist.

Lakelets, or large tanks, are numerous in Mewar and Dungurpur, and these add greatly to the beauty of the scenery. They are the signs of a somewhat by-gone civilisation, when much value was placed on storage of the rainfall for an irrigation system which is not so carefully attended to now. Some of the lakes are of considerable size, and they are all formed in the same manner, by damming up the end of a deep broad valley. The Debar Lake near Kharwara, thus made, is said to be one of the largest artificial lakes in the world, being in the rainy season about 50 miles in circumference. The dam is 80 feet deep at the inner side, and 120 feet high at the outer, with a very great breadth between the walls. Public works of this kind were in those times meritorious and religious in their character, and they are generally regarded as blessed by Vishnu, the preserving deity. The labour expended on them was unpaid, food, however, being given free. At Debar the masons, as representing the skilled labour, were given the privilege of inscribing their names on the dam, which accordingly is covered on its broad face and pavement top with blocks of rough marble, bearing a vast number of names cut in the Hindi character. The engineering was so well done that the dam, closing in this extensive sheet of water, is only 120 yards long, and the overflow is sent out 12 miles off. We visited this lake on our way back to Udaipur, and rowed up the middle to have a good view of its great size and beautiful wooded hill-surroundings. Some fine mahseer, the Indian salmon,

caught in the lake outlet by Bhils, were brought to our camp, which was pitched at the dam, and we soon discovered that the Bhils are as good fishermen as they are hunters.

The next morning these Bhil fishermen showed us some sport on the Teri stream which flows from the lake. Using the casting net, they took a mahseer of about 10 lbs. after various trials, and then they proceeded to the exciting sport of spearing with a light harpoon, having a barbed point with a metal socket fitting a bamboo shaft, and connected with it by a long length of strong line lapped round the shaft so as to run off easily when the fish is struck, and the harpoon holds. A number of men and boys swam into a pool known to contain big fish, and by diving and causing disturbance of the water right down to the bottom, drove the fish towards the harpooners, who were posted on commanding positions at certain shallow runs: and nets having been stretched across the shallows between the pools, the fish were there checked, and in swimming back, again offered a mark for the harpoon. I saw a mahseer, thus struck, dart straight up the side of a shallow run, where the water was so low that his dorsal fin showed right out of it, and reach the deep pool he had left, the lapped line spinning off the thrown shaft, which was dragged to the pool a few yards up, and there made to dance on it, sometimes being taken under, then reappearing on the surface, and floating quietly while the fish rested a bit, again to be jerked hither and thither, and even to be thrown up vertically as it was pulled down suddenly and violently. At last the struggles ceased, and the harpooner, swimming towards the shaft, took the line, played the tired fish a little, and then landed a fine 12-lb. mahseer.

The harpoon arrow is used in the dry and hot season, when the streams consist of pools of clear

water at distant intervals, with often no surface flow between them, but connected by copious percolation through sand and gravel. The big "murrel" are generally the fish that fall to the harpoon arrow, for it is their habit to rise slowly to the surface from time to time, before going down again into the depths. The fisherman, perched on a rock or steep bank over a pool, perfectly motionless like the king-fisher bird, with the harpoon arrow fitted to his bow-string ready for instant use, watches for the fish to rise. When struck, it dashes to the bottom, carrying with it the barbed arrow head, from the socket of which the shaft is jerked and lies floating on the water. A fine line, made from the wild silk cocoon (which is plentiful in the jungles around), is attached to the arrow head and connects with the shaft, round which it is lapped to a considerable length, so as to run off easily when pulled, and allow plenty of play to the fish. When it is seen that the fish is tired out and lies quiet, the fisherman enters the pool, and taking the line, is able to land the fish if lying at the open bottom, but if under a stone or in a rock cleft, he dives and lays hold of it. One of the Bhils told us of the death of his brother the previous year when so engaged fishing. He dived to find the fish lodged in a narrow jagged cleft, and forcing his hand in was unable to withdraw it before the suffocation of drowning overtook him; and thus held, he lay dead in the pool. He had been fishing alone, and his long absence being noticed, a search was made, resulting in his bow being found on the bank, and the arrow seen floating on the water. A companion of his dived and found the poor fellow at the bottom, held as described. The hand and arm had been so twisted and fixed that help was required to free the body by force.

Promotion to the substantive rank of Major-General

brought my Brigadier-General's command to an end ; and thus, on 4th February 1887, I finished my service in India.

I became Lieutenant-General in December 1890, and General in April 1894.

## CHAPTER IX

(1888-1890)

I SHALL now introduce a short sketch of my twin brother's successful Army career, commencing from 1857, when his regiment, H.M.'s 29th, then in Burma, was moved to Calcutta, to strengthen the garrison there. Being qualified as interpreter in Hindustani, his services were made available for H.M.'s 97th Regiment, on its arrival with the reinforcements from England. This gave him the opportunity to take part in the campaign then being undertaken for the recovery of British supremacy in India, as the 97th joined a force which fought its way through Southern Oudh, and was engaged at the siege and capture of Lucknow.

We met in June 1858, when I was with my detachment of the 7th Punjab Infantry near Cawnpur, and he on his way to Simla, on short leave of absence. Later that year he was appointed Staff Officer to a column under the command of Colonel W. Turner (97th),<sup>1</sup> which held the line of the Grand Trunk Road near Benares, and was engaged in the operations against the energetic rebel leader, Koer Singh, including the capture of Jugdespur, and other successful affairs. For that service his name was noted for the brevet of Major, which he obtained after his promotion to Captain. He exchanged in 1860 to the 46th, which was then in Bengal, and in consideration of his Staff services in the field, his

<sup>1</sup> The late Brigadier-General Sir William Turner, C.B., K.C.S.I.

name was noted for appointment to the permanent Army Staff. At the same time I was doing my very utmost to be reappointed to the Punjab infantry, urging as a strong claim my late field service with the 7th Regiment (renumbered 19th). And here Dame Fortune stepped in to decide what was best for us. She regarded us as interchangeable, adaptable twins, and arranged in some mysterious manner that my brother should be appointed Commandant of the 29th Punjab Infantry, while I was sent to the Army Staff; and the arrangement worked out well. My brother made his regiment a first-rate fighting one, and gave it the high reputation which it still bears. He commanded it in the Jowaki expedition on the Punjab frontier, 1877-78, for which he was mentioned in despatches. The regiment again, under his command, rendered signal service with the Kuram Field Force under General Sir Frederick Roberts, 1878-79, and was engaged at the assault and capture of the Afghan strong position on the Peiwar Kotal. Later, he commanded it in the Zaimusht and Waziri expeditions. For these services he was mentioned in despatches, and made C.B.

He became Brigadier-General in command of the Kuram Brigade, and afterwards commanded the 2nd Brigade in the Mahsud-Waziri expedition of 1881, for which he was mentioned in despatches, and thanked by the Government of India. He was appointed Brigadier-General on the fixed establishment of general officers in 1882, and was posted to the Multan Brigade. He was transferred to the Rawal Pindi Brigade in 1884, and to the superior command of the eastern district (Assam) in 1885. This gave him another opportunity of special service, when he commanded the operations from that frontier district in the Burma war of 1886-87, for which he was mentioned in despatches, and again received the

thanks of the Government of India. He was appointed K.C.B. in 1898.

He left India about the same time as I did, in 1887, and in 1890 was appointed Assistant Military Secretary for Indian Affairs to H.R.H. The Duke of Cambridge, Commander-in-Chief; and after six years of admirable work in that post, he was nominated Member of the Council of the Secretary of State for India, a position for which he was well fitted by a long career of distinguished service.

The striking personal likeness between my brother and myself, which I have mentioned in the beginning of this Memoir, has continued through life, and in consequence, many mistakes, some of them very amusing and quite after the manner of the "Comedy of Errors," have occurred. The following are a few of them.

In 1860 I was on a visit to my brother, then Captain in the 29th, and on detachment at Newcastle-on-Tyne. It was "Kit inspection" day for his company, and on going to the barrack where the kits were laid out, he sent the colour-serjeant to his room in the officers' quarters for some papers which he had left on the table there. I was in the room and at the table when the serjeant came in, and seeing his captain there, as he thought, he stood amazed, and in dumb fear of something supernatural, for he regarded me as a ghost. I imagined he had come to report that the kits were ready for inspection, and had missed meeting my brother, so I told him that he had gone a few minutes before: my voice was the same as my brother's, and this, while still mystifying him, yet had some reassuring effect, for in a hushed tone he said he had come for the papers, and taking them up, he walked away softly. He learnt from some one as he left the officers' quarters of the "twin-captain," and then understood that he

had not seen an apparition. He joined my brother at the inspection, and when the duty was over, told him of the "awful turn" he had when he entered his room.

In 1881 I was laid up with illness in Simla, and was kindly attended by the Staff surgeon attached to Army Head-quarters: he had just left me one morning confined to my bed, when, on riding away from my house, he met me (as he thought) cantering up to it on my well-known Kalmaki pony, and saw that I passed quickly without noticing him. He was immensely puzzled until he met some one immediately after, from whom he heard that the rider of my pony was my twin brother, who had lately come to Simla. He told me next morning of his momentary amazement at the vision of myself on the pony, which he recognised, riding up to the house where he had just left me ill in bed.

I had sat down to lunch in the United Service Club, Pall Mall, and was engaged in the full satisfaction of a good appetite, when one of my brother's friends, who was sitting near, came to me and said: "You are a strange fellow. I have just seen you finish a capital lunch, pay for it, and leave; and immediately after you come back, forget you have had lunch, order another, and begin again." I first said it was a way I had, and then explained that I had met my brother in the hall leaving the Club as I entered.

A mutual friend, a lady, meeting me after my marriage, and mistaking me for my brother, said: "So Tom is married? And is his wife nice? I do hope he is happy." It would have caused awkward confusion to explain the mistake, so I merely replied "Oh yes! She is very nice, and he is very happy," and made an excuse to hurry away.

Another mutual friend, a gentleman in this instance,



happening to fall in with me about the same time, linked his arm in mine as we walked along, and said in a confidential manner: "Tell me, like a good fellow, about your brother Tom's marriage—has it turned out well? I used to know the lady, and——" He was on the point of pouring out further remarks when I interrupted him with: "I can assure you it is a great success: I know this well, for *I am the other fellow*, and not the one you think." He was speechless with astonishment for a moment or two, and then we both had a good laugh at the mistake.

On my return from Persia in 1891 I attended the first of the Commander-in-Chief's *levées* that season, and on entering the room, His Royal Highness at once began to refer to a conversation of the previous day (with my brother, then Assistant Military Secretary) and a letter he had that morning received from India. I tried twice to explain who I was, but without success, and finding it difficult to interrupt His Royal Highness again, the very short time which is necessarily fixed for an ordinary *levée* interview passed, and I retired without the mistake being made known. I met General Sir Donald Stewart outside, and told him what had happened, on which he said he was to dine with the Duke that night, and would mention it to him. I heard from him afterwards that His Royal Highness had discovered the mistake immediately the next officer entered. He had thought that my brother, from a punctilious notion of duty, had attended the first *levée*, and on his leaving, he looked in the list for the next name, and saw mine as "Military Attaché, Tehran." He therefore, on seeing some one else enter, at once understood that he had mistaken the Military Attaché for his Secretary.

The following, yet another instance of mistaken identity, is too good to be omitted. My brother was gazetted K.C.B. in the Queen's Birthday Gazette of

21st May 1898, and I happened to attend the *Levée* at St James' two days later. After being presented to H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, I received congratulations on the honour of K.C.B. from some members of the Royal Family. I could not stop to explain; it would have been unpardonable of me to do so on such an occasion, and, moreover, it would have shown a great want of tact, for the remarkable Royal memory seldom goes wrong. Accordingly, I carried away the congratulations meant for my brother, and conveyed them to him.

Nothing particular concerning myself happened till October 1888, when I was asked by General Sir Donald Stewart if I would be inclined to accept an offer of the Governorship of the Imperial British East Africa Company, with head-quarters at Mombasa. This was a most tempting offer, but I felt bound to refuse it, as I understood that I would have to reside at Mombasa on the coast, a place in 5° south latitude, reeking with damp, and I knew from my experience of Bombay, and Port Louis, Mauritius, that continued moist heat was dead against health and energy with me. Dry heat I could bear, and keep well in it, too, to any extent; so I told Sir Donald that had the Company also undertaken operations in Suakin and the Sudan, where the climate is hot and dry, I would have been delighted to accept a post there; or if I could look to being much in the dry climate of the Masai country, 80 miles up from the coast, I would have liked to give myself a trial in the post. But I saw that it was necessary to carry on the administration from Mombasa, and I regretted to feel obliged, in justice to the Company and myself, to decline acceptance. I continued in favour with Fortune, however, notwithstanding this refusal on my part of a good offer, for in July 1889 I was informed through my friend, Colonel Sir

Edward Bradford,<sup>1</sup> late Secretary in the Political Department, India Office, who was then Chief Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, that Sir Philip Currie,<sup>2</sup> Under Secretary in the Foreign Office, would be glad to see me regarding special service with Her Majesty's Legation at Tehran. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff,<sup>3</sup> Her Majesty's Minister at the Court of Persia, was then in London in connection with the Shah's visit to England, and I talked the matter of my appointment, as Military Attaché and Oriental Secretary to the Legation, over with him, Sir Alfred Lyall (then on the Council of the Secretary of State for India), and Sir Philip Currie; and finally it was arranged that my appointment would be proposed to Lord Salisbury. Eventually, the Queen's sanction was obtained, and I was directed to proceed to Tehran in the end of the year, to arrive there shortly after the Minister.

I travelled *via* Constantinople, Batoum, and Tiflis, staying a week at the "Hotel d'Angleterre," in Constantinople, where I was made an honorary member of the Constantinople Club, a most English looking place. I made the acquaintance of Sir William White,<sup>4</sup> the British Ambassador, and other celebrities, and also picked up an agreeable and clever travelling companion in M. Knobel, on his way to Tehran to establish the Dutch Legation there. He had come straight from St Petersburg, where he had been for some years, and had gained an excellent knowledge of the Russian language, so there was mutual advantage in our arrangement that he should be interpreter while we travelled in the Caucasus, and I

<sup>1</sup> Colonel Sir Edward R. C. Bradford, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.S.I.

<sup>2</sup> The Right Hon. Lord Currie, P.C., G.C.B.

<sup>3</sup> The Right Hon Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

<sup>4</sup> The late Right Hon. Sir William White, G.C.B., G.C.M.G.

should act in a similar capacity in Persia. We voyaged to Batoum in an Austrian Lloyd's steamer, taking four days on the passage, and passed on at once to Tiflis. The winter of 1889-90 was exceptionally severe, and we found the whole country more or less under snow. I was agreeably surprised with the comforts and conveniences of life and travel which I found in the Caucasus, and my astonishment was great to see electric light everywhere, even on board the Caspian steamers. The voyage from Baku to Resht, the Caspian port for Tehran, was most enjoyable, as the sea was like a mirror, in which the snow-covered mountain and coast scenery were reflected as in a calm Scottish lake. We found deep snow at Resht, an unusual sight on the low coast there (80 feet below ocean level), and had a very rough, cold journey the whole way to Tehran (200 miles). The great depth of snow on the direct road over the Kharzan pass obliged us to follow the lengthened lower route along which the Russian carriage road was afterwards constructed. It is an easy journey now from Resht to Tehran by this new carriage road, which practically takes Russia to the gates of the capital and the Shah's palace. I was met, on arrival at Resht, by a Legation courier, with a very kind letter of welcome from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, inviting me to be his guest. I would here say that I enjoyed Sir Henry's splendid hospitality from first to last while he was Minister, and that we were always on the most delightful terms of friendship and *camaraderie*.

I found my new duties with the Legation most interesting, and I took most kindly and quickly to all my surroundings. Sir Henry, in introducing me to the Shah (Nasr-ed-Din), mentioned that I was in the confidence of both the British and Indian Governments, and this, with my knowledge of the Persian language and varied Oriental experiences, enabled me to make a

favourable start in quickly becoming acquainted with the ministers and prominent individuals at the Court and the capital. Socially, I found the Persian people a great improvement on the other Orientals of the further East whom I had met. They are of a happy disposition and bright imagination, doubtless produced by the dry clear air of their high table-land, which relieves from dulness and depression. They enjoy a joke and laugh heartily, and they are able to see that most things have their amusing side. I was struck with much among all classes which showed that their manners and ways had been favourably touched and turned by a softening civilisation of ancient date.

There was much diplomatic activity in most of the Legations at Tehran that winter, and "unofficially" supported concessionaires and syndicate agents were tempting the Shah and his ministers with proposals regarding roads, railways, and also monopolies connected with tobacco and opium. Hospitality, as an aid and stimulant, was not less active than diplomacy, and they ran together very merrily at dinners and dances. But nothing of profit to the countries concerned came out of all the talk: the tobacco concession had a very short existence after it became the property of a corporation, and prospective railways were destroyed by an agreement between Persia and Russia to block all such enterprises for a considerable term of years. An account of the manner in which this was done appeared in an article on "The Middle East" in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* of March 1900, and in connection with what is there stated the following may be mentioned. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had found his opportunity with the Shah in the beginning of 1889, when the Russian Minister, Prince Dolgorouki, left Tehran, and some time passed before a successor was appointed. The late Shah was generally disinclined to pay serious attention to a "Chargé d'Affaires," and as Sir Henry's



PRINCE OVEYS MOTAMED-ED-DOWLEH, FORMERLY GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF FARS



high reputation as a diplomatist had preceded him, Nasr-ed-Din gave ear to him regarding the opening of the Karun river in the south to the navigation of the world, while he ignored the Russian objections to this step.

It so happened that a clever successor to Dolgorouki, M. de Butzow, arrived at Tehran in July 1890, and Sir Henry became very ill in September, and remained so until his departure for England in November. The Russian Minister took the fullest advantage of this opportunity, and succeeded in getting the Shah's approval of a draft agreement between the two countries to shut out railways for ten years from that time. Owing to Sir Henry's serious illness the Legation was detained for some time in the summer quarters at Gulhak after all the Legations and the Persian Government had returned to Tehran for the winter, and thus the machinery for obtaining information was to some extent thrown out of gear. We were accordingly rather late in discovering that the formal contradiction of negotiations being in progress for this Russo-Persian agreement was not true, and when the First Secretary and I had an interview with the Grand Vazir concerning it, we ascertained that the matter had gone almost too far for warnings to have any effect. The Vazir argued that the wording of the clause in the agreement regarding railway projects, to be considered by the two parties at the end of the period fixed, permitted of Persia being advised then, and he implied that this included English advice, which would naturally protect English interests. From this he went on to say that a railway to the south of Persia could not possibly be allowed without the consent of England, and that therefore the Shah's existing promise to that effect would continue to have effect. We asked that this promise should be fully stated in the agreement, but it was hardly to be expected that the Russian Minister, the astute



M. de Butzow, would consent, and accordingly it found no place in that document. In the course of this conversation I remarked to the Prime Minister that Russia was seeking to reduce Persia to the condition of the Khanate of Bokhara, by asking for such a sign of surrender of her sovereign rights as this agreement signified. On our Foreign Office being informed of all this, we were instructed to submit an important communication to the Shah, which concluded with the statement that in event of the agreement being ratified, England reserved to herself the right to protect her own interests. We accordingly again saw the Grand Vazir, and requested the favour of an interview with the Shah.

The interview took place the following day, and His Majesty said he was surprised to hear that the British Government took such a serious view of a matter which he had not regarded as of great importance. His Majesty, moreover, said that he had understood from his Prime Minister that we also had not regarded it so seriously at first, on which Mr Kennedy (First Secretary) asked me to repeat, among other things, what I had specially said regarding a comparison with the Khanate of Bokhara. I knew how extremely sensitive the Shah was on this particular point, and I therefore prefaced my statement by expressing the hope that His Majesty would pardon my boldness, and then repeated the conversation. He always wore glasses at interviews, and when I had finished speaking, he pushed them up to his lambskin cap so as to uncover his eyes with an angry gesture, and looked sternly at me for a few moments, and then, recovering his composure, said very quietly that he had accepted the draft, and therefore the agreement was made, but that it could never result in anything unfavourable to British interests in the south of Persia. The Shah had always from the first regarded me in a friendly manner, and he

showed at the close of the interview that this feeling on his part had not changed, for, on being informed that I was about to leave on temporary duty to India, he said he hoped I would return to the Legation.

*A propos* of autocratic sovereigns receiving frankness well, the following incident regarding the late Czar, of which I have some personal knowledge, is worth repeating. His Majesty was playing whist (out of his own dominions) with an English Royalty as partner, and one of his equerries with a Scottish gentleman as opponents. His Majesty held a good hand, and towards the end of it said: "We have the game, four by honours and the odd trick." The Scot said: "Please, Your Majesty, let us play the hand out," and when that was done he added: "Your Majesty made a revoke." The Equerry looked aghast at the boldness, and the Czar said: "I have never made a revoke in my life." The Scot replied: "Perhaps Your Majesty was never told," and proceeded to turn over the tricks, and show the revoke. The Equerry was more aghast than ever, and the English Royalty smilingly said: "Pardon my friend's bluntness." The next day, the Czar, happening to meet the Scottish gentleman, said with a laugh: "I have been thinking over what you said yesterday about the revoke, and probably it is true that I never was told." The moral of this anecdote applies with much force at present to the Czar's ignorance of the real situation in Russia.

I have said that the Shah from the first had regarded me in a favourable manner. I think my name, being the same as that of the hero of Khartoum, attracted his notice, and I was also told by one whose position at Court gave him first-hand knowledge, that His Majesty was well pleased to see a military attaché at last appointed to the British Legation. My informant added that the appointment was the more acceptable as I held the rank of Major-General. Up to that time

the only European military representatives at the Court of Persia were from Russia, forming what was known as the Russian Military Mission, and consisting of a colonel commandant and three captains. These officers, assisted by six experienced non-commissioned officers, had under them the Persian Cossack Brigade (paid by the Persian Government), composed of two regiments of cavalry and a battery of horse artillery.<sup>1</sup> In 1889 Sir H. Drummond Wolff, then His Majesty's Minister at Tehran, had strongly urged the advantage of the British army being represented at the Legation, and the post of military attaché was accordingly sanctioned. The Shah undoubtedly appreciated this step, and he took an early opportunity of showing it very pointedly at a gala review of ten thousand troops, which was held at Tehran on 31st May 1890, in honour of the Swedish special mission sent by King Oscar II. of Sweden and Norway to convey the high order of the Seraphim to His Imperial Majesty. Extraordinary efforts were made to assemble this comparatively large force of trained cavalry, artillery, and infantry, and the Cossack Brigade was a prominent feature of the parade. The Shah drove from the palace to the city gate leading towards the plain where the troops were drawn up, and there mounted his horse. Seeing me at the gate, he called me forward and said I was to ride by his side, and when his brother, the Naib-es-Sultaneh, who was Commander-in-Chief, came up to submit the parade state and take his orders, the Shah asked me to accompany his brother as principal aide-de-camp for the occasion. It was a very unusual proceeding, but I accepted the situation and took part in the march past. The incident was noticed, and there was an idea that the Shah, who had a good knowledge of Scandinavian affairs and the politics of

<sup>1</sup> This brigade still exists, and I understand that its strength in rank and file has lately been increased.

the countries of North Europe, desired to show his distinguished Swedish visitors that Great Britain was equally interested with Russia in the welfare of Persia.

My relations with the Russian officers of the Persian Cossack corps were of the most friendly nature, and on the first occasion of the Brigade annual *fête* after my arrival at Tehran, I was invited to be present at the review and inspection by the Commander-in-Chief, and to partake of the lively lunch which followed. It was a very hot day in July, and the hospitality displayed in drinks was to me as warm as the weather. There was first the invariable "zakouska," the preliminary refreshment at a "buffet" laden with everything sufficient to satisfy any ordinary appetite and thirst, but which Russians take merely as a stimulant to further hearty eating and drinking. And the toasts that were given at the solid meal after, in rapid succession, were necessarily almost speechless, in the desire to drink repeatedly to the health of all and every one. All the foreign officers in the Shah's service—German, Austrian, French, and Italian—were present, and in the general conversation which sprang up, the subject of Gibraltar was started for my especial benefit by an ex-officer of the German army, who posed as being better informed than his neighbours. He stated that the place had been once retaken from the English, and it was entirely owing to mismanagement and disagreement among its captors that it again fell into English hands. It was evident that he laboured under a topsy-turvy recollection of what he had read as having occurred when the place fell originally into our possession. My reply that the repeated attempts made to recapture it from the English had invariably ended in failure was evidently regarded as a bit of British bluff, so the pointed question was pressed upon me—Had Gibraltar ever been taken from the

English? My prompt answer, "Never," produced the challenge to back my opinion with a bet of ten gold "imperials," which I declined on the ground that I should be betting on a certainty; but this plea was not allowed, and I was pressed all the more to make the bet. The Russian artillery captain of the Cossack corps agreed with me as to the fact, but said that as the others seemed to think I should accept the challenged bet, it would be quite correct in me to consent. The talk ended in a small bet of one imperial. Two days afterwards, my argumentative German friend called on me to say he had lost the bet, and that it was lucky for him I had reduced it from ten imperials to one.

Sir Henry Drummond Wolff had arranged to go to India to consult with the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, concerning matters relating to India and Persia, but his serious illness prevented the journey. As I was to accompany him, I had been made fully informed of all the points which were to be discussed, and accordingly it was decided that I should proceed to Calcutta and represent his views. We both left Tehran the same day, 12th November 1890, Sir Henry for Resht on the Caspian, *en route* to England, and I for the Persian Gulf. Sir Henry left the following letter for me:—

"I cannot leave without saying how much I feel your exceeding kindness to me, not only during my illness, but during the whole time we have been diplomatic comrades. I really do not know what I could have done without your counsel and assistance, and words cannot represent the feeling of gratitude which I feel for your unwearied kindness during my sickness."

I had planned my journey by the proposed route from the capital to the lately opened Karun riverway, which promised to be the shortest and best line of communication between Tehran and the Persian

Gulf. A scheme was then in progress for the construction of a cart road along that route, and further information was wanted concerning it. The route lay *viâ* Kum, Sultanabad, Burujird, Khoremabad, and the Luristan hills, to the Karun valley and Arabistan (Persian Arabia). I was joined at Kum, 100 miles from Tehran, by Mr Macqueen, a Civil Engineer employed by the Imperial Bank of Persia to develop the road concession which the Bank had acquired. I travelled with a well-appointed small camp, capable of moving rapidly over difficult country. The day after I left Tehran the whole of the mules carrying my camp and kit were captured by a party of well-armed mounted nomad robbers and driven off to the hills. They were all recovered the following morning, with only one load plundered. The recovery was due to identification of the horse ridden by the leader of the gang. All the migratory tribes breed horses, and such is the habit of observation of horses in the country that as a rule a man is known by his horse as in many parts of England a man is known by his dog. The robbers allowed me to pass unmolested, as their object was to plunder my baggage, which was far behind. Their leader rode up to my party, and while looking intently at me, dropped a short stick he was carrying; on dismounting to pick it up, the mare he rode wheeled round, and I noticed that she had lost her right eye. The road guards, themselves nomads, when hearing from me the description of the party we had met, and that one, who seemed to be the leader, was riding a blood-looking chestnut mare, blind of the right eye, at once said, "Oh! Kara Beg and his sons are in this," and rode off rapidly to follow the trail. This happened on the high road about 25 miles from Tehran, and the authorities there were so active in having Kara Beg hunted that he entirely disappeared. After this little adventure I

pursued my journey, observing and noting what was useful to know, and nothing very unusual happened until I reached the Luristan hill country, inhabited by the turbulent Lur tribes, who are always more or less at war with the Persian Government.

As I approached Khoremabad I saw many black-tent camps of the Sagwand Lurs, on the annual migration to their winter pasture grounds in the west, on the banks of the Kerkha, and further on I met a regiment of Persian infantry, straggling as usual over several miles of road, with their useful little donkeys carrying, in addition to tents, bedding, and provisions, everything else that the soldier himself should carry. The commanding officer, who was far behind, told me that the troops had been sent out to collect the taxes, and I afterwards heard that the Lurs I had seen were caught with their herds, flocks, and families, and the Government demands not being satisfied, distress ensued. The custom was for the tax gatherers to wait till the migration of the tribes from the hills in winter, and back in summer, to collect the dues, as flight or fight was almost impossible then, and for this reason I feared that my journey along the migrating track might be stopped or delayed by the resentful nomads. The Zahir-ud-Dowleh, Governor of Khoremabad, had been in power only six weeks; his predecessor had allowed the Lurs to get out of hand, so that, in order to vindicate the ruling authority, he found himself called upon at once to act in a sternly severe manner, and he believed that the Dirikvend section of the tribe, whose hills I was about to traverse, having had a lesson in obedience, would give no trouble. He gave me an escort of ten irregular cavalry soldiers, and ordered the Dirikvend chief, Mir Haji Khan, to meet me at the first day's stage on entering the hills, and accompany me to the

plains of Arabistan beyond. My start was a bad one, the escort of ten being represented by three only, who assured me, however, that the others would follow. They made their appearance in the evening, and I was then able to look them over critically. I was much pleased to see that they were excellently mounted, and well equipped with Werndl breech-loaders and full double bandoliers. They were of a rough, tough, good fighting type, and I felt confident that they were well worth the extra pay, with rations for themselves and their horses, which I promised them.

I was told that day that the Dirikvend Lurs were in a restless, suspicious mood, and therefore I was not surprised to hear that their chief had not obeyed the Governor's order to meet me. His nephew, Mir Namdar Khan, who was his rival in the tribe, came in his place three days later, and accompanied me part of the way to serve some purpose of his own. He and his men nearly brought off a fight with some other Lurs, on pretence of guarding my camp against an imaginary danger, and their mutual angry threats were only silenced by the practical preparations of my Khoremabad escort to have a hand in settling the quarrel in an impartial manner. I had with me one of the Legation couriers, a man of much experience and ready resource, and he suggested that we should attach ourselves to one of the tribal migrating camps, marching with them till clear of the hills, and thus escape the attentions of our volunteer guards. He arranged this with the most respectable party of the nomads under pretext of getting supplies of mutton and milk during the journey, payment, of course, being made on a liberal scale. This alliance worked most satisfactorily, and saw us safely over the greater portion of the road.

When we reached comparatively open country we said good-bye to our Lur friends, and passed on, to



find, however, the next day, that we had been hasty in considering all danger past. We had halted for breakfast, and sent on the camp caravan with five of the escort, keeping five with ourselves: when we mounted to resume our journey, information was brought that a strong party of Lur horsemen had taken up a position on the road between us and the caravan, and intended to prevent us passing to rejoin it. We found this to be the case, and the Khoremabad horsemen at once galloped forward with us to place themselves ready to reply to the Lurs with their rifles. But at that moment a peacemaker appeared in the form of a moulla who had attached himself to my camp on leaving Khoremabad, for protection and other advantages on his journey through the inhospitable Lur country. He hurried up on his well-bred riding donkey, and offered his services to explain who we were, and to show that it would be folly to quarrel with us. Away he went patter, patter, over the stones on his knowing-looking moke, and, after a short palaver, came back accompanied by several of the Lur horsemen, who said, "We are friends, and the road is free to you." They stated that their tribe had a grievance against the Persian Government, and they had acted as they did under the belief that I was a "General" in the Persian service. They knew of such an officer who had been in their hills a few years before. I told them that under any circumstances they would have punished the whole tribe by their folly, as retribution would have hunted them on the winter low grounds in Arabistan, and made escape possible only by return to the snow-clad hills, there to suffer severely with their families and flocks from cold and hunger. They promised me to allow my Khoremabad escort to return unmolested, and I afterwards learnt that they kept their promise.

We had heard that the road between Khoremabad and Dizful had been put in repair, the bad bits over the difficult passes cleared of boulders and made somewhat easy, caravanserais built, a telegraph line erected, and road guards established ; but we found this to be wholly incorrect. Very little had been done to improve the old track : attempts to clear it were apparent here and there, but all had been done piecemeal, and without relation to any regular plan. The idea had been to establish the Government authority by means of a good road with caravanserais, military posts, and a properly equipped telegraph line, but few steps had been taken to carry it out effectually. I was in a position to inform the Minister of Telegraphs of the true state of affairs, and he took steps to put an end to the pretence of a telegraph service across the Luristan hills. We saw that this route could never be adopted for a commercial cart road, the ascents being too steep, and the descents too deep and difficult to allow of such a road being made except at very great cost ; but we had favourable accounts of another route which turns the high ranges over which we passed, and this was fully examined by Mr Macqueen on his return journey, with good results. This latter is the line along which I hope a light railway may be made in the early future to connect the Karun water-way (or railway) with the rich inland districts of Burujird, Kirmanshah, and Hamadan. I should add that the Persian Government eventually decided that the road and telegraph line over the Luristan hills were not worth the large sums supposed to be spent on them, and ceased to sanction further efforts in that direction. There is now very effective telegraph communication between Tehran and Arabistan by means of a branch leading from the Indo-European main line near Shiraz, and a good hill road under British management connects with Isfahan.

We reached Dizful, an ancient town on the Diz

affluent of the Karun, on the 7th December. Dizful claims to be the City of Daniel, and the Governor, Haji Hasan Khan, who came out to meet me, said in a tone of deep respect as we rode over the ancient bridge leading into it, "You are now entering the city of the prophet Daniel, honoured be his name." This shows that there yet lingers in the land a romantic reverence for the great Jewish names and Vazirs, famous in the days of Biblical and early Persian history. I left Dizful on the 10th December, and was met that day by Khoda Karm Khan, a relative of the Bakhtiari chief, Isfendiar Khan, who was posted on the road to Shuster with one hundred Bakhtiari horsemen, ready for service on the neighbouring Turkish border. He came towards me with his troop formed in line, both men and horses presenting a remarkably good appearance. I was also met by Naval Sartip (Commander) Ahmad Khan, of the screw steamer *Persepolis* (600 tons), then lying at Mohamrah, the only vessel of war at that time belonging to Persia. The Sartip and the Bakhtiaris conducted me to a very comfortable and well provided camp which had been prepared for my party.

The following day I reached Shuster, the "Shushan" of the Bible, where I was received by the Governor-General of Persian Arabia in the most hospitable manner. The river Karun was then in flood from recent heavy rain, and the ancient great bridge there (built A.D. 265-70), known as Valerian's, showed well over the wide waters. Several of its arches were carried away by an unusually high flood in 1885, and the attempts made to rebuild them in 1886 and 1888 failed. Want of energy in prosecuting the repairs when once begun appears to have wrecked the work on each occasion. The Governor-General has his residence in the fort, which stands high on a rocky position on the river-bank about 300 yards above the old



ARAB GIRL GOING TO THE WELL

(The line here is 26)



A LAR TUTUNGCHI (MUSKETEER).



bridge. The citadel had been greatly altered and improved as a place of residence, and the underground apartments (for use during the extreme daytime heat in summer), cut out of the solid rock down to the river-bed level, are very fine in their way. Within the outworks are the arsenal and barracks, with a parade ground sufficient for infantry drill purposes: all the buildings and quarters were in good order and well kept, and the arsenal was fully and carefully stocked with Werndl breech-loading rifles and ammunition. There was a good appearance of efficiency and discipline in the garrison of six companies of the Hamadan regiment, and an artillery detachment with two Austrian mountain guns.

Stored in the arsenal were three old big guns, bronze and brass: one a very long piece of heavy metal and small calibre, said to be of the Suffivan period, and quite two hundred and fifty years old; another, a really great gun, cast for Nadir Shah at Howizah, in Arabistan, which has always been noted for its metal workers, and at the present day is a busy place of manufacture of metal fittings for horse furniture; and I was told that the third gun was of Russian make, with a Russian inscription on it of the year 1828. I remarked to the Persian officers present that 1828 was the year of the Turkmanshahi treaty after the war with Russia, on which one of them boastingly said that the gun was one of the many taken by the Persians in that war, and that it, along with another now at Ahwaz, had been sent from Tehran in 1856 for the war with the English. The gun stood in a dark corner, and on close examination I found a Persian inscription on it as well as the Russian one, telling that it was presented on the occasion of the Treaty of Peace in 1828 by the Czar, Nicolas the First of Russia, to Abbas Mirza, son and heir apparent of Fateh Ali Shah, and Commander-in-Chief of the Persian army.

The band of the Hamadan regiment was performing in the courtyard of the Governor-General's residence at Shuster during one of my visits, and casting my eye over the musicians, I was struck with the look of the bandmaster, who appeared to me to be more European than Persian. When I asked about him afterwards I was told that he was a Russian of German extraction, and a renegade Mahomedan, renamed Ali Islam; he had been about ten years in Persia, and spoke Persian fluently, and it was understood that he had fled from Odessa as a Nihilist suspect, or otherwise dangerous political character. He had busied himself much with mapping the country at the various places where he was employed, and making notes on many subjects. I had two opportunities of observing and talking with him: once when he accompanied the colonel commanding the Hamadan regiment, who came to call upon me, and again when I returned the colonel's call. I was told that he lived with this officer as "tutor and companion," and he reminded me in some way of the Effendi Zaman Beg whom I have previously mentioned. They appeared to be alike in repenting the error of their ways in Russia and labouring to render some service to their late masters with a view to pardon and return whence they had fled.

I shall not attempt any description of the ruins of the past, and the evidences of great public works of far-extending utility, built sixteen centuries before, which met my gaze and stirred my imagination at Shuster and Ahwaz, as this has already been well done by several very competent travellers in those regions. I shall confine my observations now to incidents of the journey and modern matters of interest which attracted my attention. The Karun, and its branch the Gargar, are navigated by steamers to within 12 and 6 miles respectively of Shuster. The *Shushan*, a stern-wheeler (Nile boat pattern) of 30 tons, plies on the former, and

the *Susa*, a steel launch of 20 tons, plies on the latter. I believe it has now been found practicable to take the *Susa* to within 3 miles of Shuster. I dropped down the Gargar on an inflated skin-raft, and went on board the *Susa*, which on the run down stopped at Bund-i-Kir, the point of junction of three streams—the two already mentioned, and the Diz. At Bund-i-Kir a well-built serai, with telegraph office and guard-house, was being completed: from its roof I had a good view of the flat country all round, and of the dense jungles on the banks of the three streams. These thickets are said to be the haunts of large and small game, including the maneless lion, swamp deer, hog, and francolin partridge. The lion was described as of skulking habits, and unequal to the African animal in size and appearance.

I observed great patches of oil-smooth water floating down the surface of the Karun; these were oil-spreads from the petroleum springs near Shuster which always give a large overflow after heavy rain. There had been a heavy fall a few days before, followed by the usual flush into the river, which Captain Plant of the *Shushan* told me he had found at many places smelling strongly of petroleum. I reached Ahwaz on the 16th December, slept on board the small *Susa*, and landed the next morning. I was received by the Arab Sheikh of the village of Ahwaz, attended by a number of horsemen, and was also met by the mounted officers of the Faridan regiment of infantry, who conducted me to their camp, where, after tea and tobacco, the regiment marched past. The men were neatly dressed in grey, looked well cared for, and altogether made a good show. The Sartip (Colonel) of the corps, Haji Mustafa Khan, was a well-to-do landlord of Chadagan, an elevated and well-watered fertile tract in the Faridan district near Isfahan. He exercised Civil charge as well as military command at Ahwaz, and kept up good style, living in camp with his regiment. Common report credited him with hand-



ing scrupulously to his men all he got from Government for them, which is rather unusual in Persia. Their well-fed appearance and general look of contentment seemed also to bear witness to their colonel's upright dealing. The men with their donkeys (almost every Persian soldier has a donkey) found remunerative employment in transporting cargo between the steamer landing-places below and above the Ahwaz rapids, and in the building work then going on.

Ahwaz at that time had the appearance of awakening from the long, long sleep of centuries—a sleep which began when the great dam burst, and its grand irrigation system, that gave life to an immense area of fertile country, was destroyed. The remains of the ancient city, its water-mills, and far-extending canals, tell of rich prosperity and commercial activity, with a teeming population, in those early days. All the way down from Shuster, the signs of this ancient prosperity may be seen in the dykes, water-courses, and banks of dried canals which intersect the country in every direction. It was hoped that the opening of the Karun to the navigation of the world would have been followed by some practical schemes for developing the great natural resources of its valley; but rivalry in the north stood in the way of further success in the south, and the first result of opening up the river to the commerce of all nations was an agreement between Russia and Persia to postpone railway communication in Persia for a considerable number of years. It is a question whether this so-called agreement could be held to be really binding on Persia if she had a progressive Government which insisted on opening up the country to commerce. A great authority on International Law has stated that “the injustice and mischief of admitting that nations have a right to use force for the express purpose of retarding and diminishing the prosperity of their inoffensive neighbours are too revolting to allow

such a right to be inserted in the international code."

But while waiting for the restoration of the great dam at Ahwaz, a Persian company in 1890 began the construction of a horse-tramway, about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles long, to facilitate the trans-shipment of steamer cargo which the "rapids" necessitated. This company, which is called the "Nasiri," also acquired possession of land there which in the future should prove to be of considerable value. They had at the time of my visit finished a commodious caravanserai with storage and shelter sheds, and a landing wharf. They also owned a small steamer, the *Nasiri*, plying on the Lower Karun, and running in connection with the *Susa* on the upper stream. The *Nasiri* was principally used as a tug, taking two Arab boats of about 27 tons each lashed alongside her. It was then being arranged to transfer this steamer to the upper stream, the *Karun* of 60 tons taking her place below, and a second vessel was being ordered to supplement the navigation service there. This trading company had secured the co-operation of Sheikh Mizal, the principal Arab chief in Persian Arabistan, who, though friendly at heart to the English, had opposed the development of trade in the Karun valley, being suspicious of a closer interest in him and his large possessions, which might follow on the country being opened up to commerce. He was exceedingly wealthy, both by inheritance of lands, flocks, and herds, and subsequent increase of material prosperity. He exercised great personal influence in Arabistan from the sea to Wais, above Ahwaz, and his partnership was an element of strength to the Nasiri Company. This combination produced a healthy competition in the river trade with Messrs Lynch Brothers, who were then running the *Blosse Lynch*, a fine boat of 300 tons, on the Lower Karun, in connection with the *Shushan*, which I have

already described, on the upper stream. Having voyaged on the Upper Karun in the Nasiri Company's boat, the *Susa*, I took passage in the *Blosse Lynch* to Mohamrah (100 miles), where I arrived in eleven hours from Ahwaz.

The great date-palm groves on the Lower Karun, near Mohamrah and the Shat-el-Arab, are a delight to the eye. The capabilities of the available lands there for date cultivation are great, and are sure to attract planters when facilities are afforded. The date supply keeps increasing year by year, and so does the demand: 60,000 tons were exported from Busrah in 1890 in ocean steamers and coasting craft. An acre of ground holds a hundred trees: they bear fruit at five years, and reach full fruition at seven. In a fairly good season a tree in full bearing gives an average profit of Rs.3, at which rate the acre would give a good return, say £20. While the trees are growing up, the ground, with the irrigation which the trees require, yields a crop of wheat, clover, or grass, and later can afford pasture, there being but little heavy shade thrown by the feathery palm foliage above. It was interesting to hear of one hundred and sixty varieties of the date-palm, said to be distinguishable by the native growers from difference or peculiarity in fruit or stone, leaf or stem. The Arabs pay close attention to conditions of climate, soil, and water, so as to cultivate the fruit to the best advantage. I have given the profit on date cultivation in rupees, as my informant spoke of it in that coin. This is explained by the fact that the Indian rupee is current all over Arabistan. It is taken and asked for in preference to Persian krans, which then were all of the old currency, and the Arabs gave as the reason for their preference, that a bad rupee is seldom seen, whereas they find many false coins among the krans.



W. A. CLARK, LEADING THE WAY





I think there is a good agricultural future in store for the Karun valley. Its great fertility was turned to good account by the ancients, and the restoration of its old irrigation works, which is now contemplated, should abundantly repay the outlay. Its soil is capable of producing a wonderful variety of crops—wheat, barley, rice, maize, sugar-cane, sesame, cotton, tobacco, opium, and indigo—and I am glad to think that British enterprise may take part in the development of this naturally fertile province which, under good management, might become a little Egypt. I may add that the neighbouring oil-fields are likely to increase its wealth and prosperity. The petroleum springs near Shuster have been known for centuries. They occur in the lower or inner belt of the Zagros hill ranges, running north-west and south-east. Borings, recently made with modern appliances in the same belt near Kirmanshah in the north-west, are said to have been successful in proving the existence of abundant oil, and there are the same unmistakable signs in the neighbourhood of Shuster and Ram Hormuz, near Ahwaz, in the south-east. If springs of real commercial value are found there, pipe lines to conduct the oil by gravitation to the port of Mohamrah, accessible to vessels of 1,500 tons, could easily be laid. As for labour in those parts, liberal pay and good treatment will attract plenty of it.

Persian Arabistan is the winter resort of Bakhtiaris and Lurs, who move down to the pastures there with their flocks and herds when the snow and severe cold in their hills make life too uncomfortable for man and beast, and they are to be found living on friendly terms with the Arab tribes who reside and roam there all the year round. It was the force of the argument that their winter migration would be stopped, should my party be molested, which induced the Lurs to say to me, when they came to listen to reason, "The road is free to you." I was able to observe among this

gathering of tribesmen in Arabistan a feeling of independence and desire for change, which only await a leading spirit to make them combine and take a strong part on the side that may suit them best.

The principal Arab chief in Persian Arabistan, Sheikh Mizal, hereditary Governor of Mohamrah, whom I have previously mentioned, exercised great influence on both the Persian and Turkish sides of the frontier. His fort residence at Failia, on the Shat-el-Arab, 3 miles above Mohamrah, was conveniently situated, with but a narrow creek between Persian and Turkish territory, so that at short notice he could find asylum on either side when necessary. He was the only powerful Arab chief left in Persian territory; all had been broken but him. Intrigues by rival relations, set up at the instance of the Government, and resulting in feuds and factions, had made an end of the others, both as to wealth and power; Sheikh Mizal alone remained with the appearance of strength, and his possessions untouched, notwithstanding long continued plotting against him. He had a well-armed 60-ton steam launch, in which, with a strong guard, he visited Mohamrah occasionally; but his deeply-rooted suspicions had never allowed him to trust himself inside the building there, known as Government House, and situated opposite the Persian barracks. Knowing this, and being anxious to see him, I offered to visit him at his fort, and he arranged to send horses for myself and two attendants. My path lay through fine date-palm groves almost all the way. I found him to be a man of handsome appearance and charming manner. He received me most hospitably, and delighted me with a show of his stable of Arab horses of the very best blood. He returned my call the next day at the Persian Government House on the river-bank, where I was accommodated and hospitably entertained during my stay by his people. He told

me that it was the first time he had ever been in that House, and it was evident that his bodyguard were very much on the alert. These were all African negroes of the blackest skin and curliest hair; men of fine physique, all carrying breech-loaders, and watching closely every movement about them, ready to act promptly on their master's sign. They looked like black curly retriever dogs eagerly watching their master's eye and hand. The Sheikh came in his armed steam launch, while a well-mounted body of armed retainers rode over from his fort to meet him at the landing-places. But all these precautions failed to save him from death by violence about six years later, when he and his young nephew were shot as they landed from a small boat at Failia, by some men who were concealed on the Turkish side of the creek. The crime is supposed to have been planned by his elder brother, Khizal, whom the father had set aside in the succession to himself, preferring (as in the case of Esau and Jacob) his younger son, Mizal, who was duly appointed heir, and eventually recognised as ruler in his father's place. But the elder brother never ceased to plan and plot his younger brother's ruin or death. Latterly he resided at Baghdad, from which place he was able to carry on his intrigues so successfully that, on his brother's death, he succeeded to his place, power, and property. The murderers were never discovered; probably they were well protected, and doubtless they were well rewarded. Doubtless also the "death duties" paid on each side of the border at Failia were very heavy, as there must have been many to conciliate and satisfy.

I arrived in Arabistan with five riding-horses, and on trying to sell them, previous to continuing my journey by river and sea, I found the prevailing idea that I should be obliged to part with them at any price much against me, and the best offer was literally little



over the value of their clothing and shoes. I parted with two inferior ones, and sent the three good ones by land route to Mohamrah, where I arranged to ship them to Karachi, India, by the British India Steam Navigation Company's vessel, *Pemba*, engaging two Arab grooms, who were in the horse trade with India, to look after them on the voyage. They delivered the horses safely at Karachi, and their sale by auction there was successful in saving me from any loss. I was rather pleased at thus getting the better of the Arab horse dealers in their own country, where they thought they had me at their mercy.

From Mohamrah I went up the Shat-el-Arab, the united Tigris and Euphrates, to Busrah, and thence down to Bushire in the Persian Gulf by the s.s. *Pemba*, taking my Persian servants there, and sending them as comfortably as possible to Tehran by the post road. The Persian war vessel, *Persepolis*, being at Bushire when I arrived there, I went on board to call upon the officers and see the ship. There were four German officers with a crew of forty Arabs, natives of the Persian coast. The Arabs were neatly dressed as are European sailors in Eastern waters, and they looked active and alert seamen. Their clear, light-brown colour and ruddy complexions made them appear excellent imitations of bronzed British tars. The ship carried four 7·5 centimetre Krupp guns, with two "Gardner" machine guns of an old type. Everything on board was neatly arranged and well kept.

From Bushire I went on to India in Her Majesty's Gunboat *Sphinx*, calling on the way at various places on both sides of the Gulf, Arabian and Persian. At Linga, one of the Gulf ports belonging to Persia, I went ashore with the captain to visit the British Agent, who had come on board the gunboat immediately on her arrival. He was an Arab of grand figure and excellent manners, and his four tall sons were fine

specimens of a manly race. This Arab trader-sailor was wealthy, and it was a great advantage to him to be under British protection, which his position as Agent afforded. He had in his temporary charge four negro youths, who had been rescued from an Arab craft in which they were found under most suspicious circumstances, pointing to an intention to sell them into slavery on the Persian coast. The poor creatures were produced for the captain to see, and it was pitiable in the extreme to witness their dumb terror. They huddled close together, and looked like hunted animals that had been caught when all possible chance of escape was gone. The Agent was treating them kindly till orders as to their disposal should be received from the Resident at Bushire.

From Linga the *Sphinx* went to Charja, on the opposite, the Arabian, coast, to make further enquiries concerning those from whom the negro boys had been rescued, and on arrival there, the Sheikh, who was also British Agent, was summoned on board to make his report. All was satisfactory so far as he was concerned, and he said through the interpreter (each vessel of war in the Gulf carries one) that he hoped a present would be given him to show to his people ashore that he had been favourably received on board. There was a lively swell on the sea at the time, and the small boat in which the Sheikh had come off danced up and down considerably, so that we were surprised to see this seafaring chief become suspiciously uneasy when he was sitting in the captain's state-room at the stern of the vessel. The interpreter said that the Sheikh was comfortable in a small boat, but not so in a big one, and that he might become unwell if he remained longer there. The captain expressed his sympathy, and said that the meeting was at an end. But the Sheikh said he was waiting for his present; the captain informed

him there was none on this occasion, but he insisted, and begged for something to produce on going ashore. He was told that the vessels of war were not provided with presents to give, that this was reserved for the Bushire Resident to do, when he came in his vessel, the *Lawrence*, as he well knew, and he was bid a courteous farewell. But he would not go, and the situation was becoming critical by his visibly increasing discomfort from the sea motion. At last the Sheikh said it was absolutely necessary for the honour of his name among his people, and his peace of mind in his own house and family (meaning his wives, as the interpreter explained), that he should return with the pretence of a present, and he asked for a box packed with anything, and nailed down. This, he said, he could keep in his cellar, and no one need know its contents but himself, and thus his credit would be saved. The interpreter (himself, Arab) was as serious as the Sheikh over the whole affair. A small wine case, carefully packed with coal, was given him, and I added from myself a silver-mounted sword cane. I showed him what a good support (the cane being a stout one) it was as a walking-stick, and what a helpful companion it might be in time of danger. Armed with this, he went away contented with his coal box, and pleased, no doubt, with the justifiable deceit he meant to practise in his Harem, for, according to a tradition of the prophet Mahomed, falsehood is permitted in three cases—first, to a husband to content a wife; second, to a warrior, to escape from his foe; and third, to any one for the purpose of reconciling enemies. Hence the proverb—"All is fair in love and war."

It was a leisurely and most enjoyable voyage down the Gulf, and I had plenty of time and opportunity to see and hear much that was useful and interesting to know regarding the coast Arabs. The

Arabs are one of the manliest races of the East, and those of the coast have long followed the calling of the sea. It is truly said of them that they were among the foremost of those in the "long ago" who went "down to the sea in ships and did business in great waters." They were well known as great traders abroad, and great pirates at home. From what I saw of them during this voyage, and of the Arab crew of the Persian gunboat *Persepolis* at Bushire, I formed the opinion that they are the "handy men" of the Indian Ocean, and are well fitted for our Naval service in the East.

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## CHAPTER X

(1891-1892)

I HAD intended, after fulfilling the special purpose of my visit, to spend at least two months in India, where I had many welcomes awaiting me, but my pleasant plans were spoilt by a telegram which reached me at Jask, a Persian Gulf station of the Indo-European telegraph (sub-marine cable), to the effect that the Foreign Office desired to know when I expected to reach London. This was on 8th January 1891, and I replied, "Early in March," and had to rearrange my plans accordingly. I reached Calcutta on 23rd January, and was made a guest of the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne. His Imperial Highness the Czarewitch of Russia, then on a tour through India, arrived on the 26th, and I thus had the pleasure and privilege of meeting His Imperial Highness and being present at the festivities in his honour.

I had an interview with His Excellency the Viceroy on the 24th, the day after my arrival, at which His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Frederick Roberts) and the Military Member of Council (Sir George Chesney<sup>1</sup>) were present, when I submitted my papers with Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's instructions, and the subjects were discussed. I may say after this lapse of time, without fear of transgressing the rules of official secrecy, that one of these subjects was what is now known as the Seistan Railway, *i.e.*, a railway

<sup>1</sup> The late General Sir George T. Chesney, K.C.B., C.S.I., C.I.E.

from Quetta to the edge of the Persian province of Seistan. This was considered indispensable to the maintenance of British influence in Persia. The desire of Russia to postpone all railway construction in Persia was seen to point to but one object, viz., her intention so to surround the country with a network of railways in her own dominions, as to make it indifferent to her whether or not there are railways in the intervening territory. The constant pressure of Russia on the borders was naturally exercising a predominant influence on the Persian mind; for, however strong the belief of the Persian Government in the friendliness of England, they perceived the impossibility of material assistance in the case of Russian aggression. It was seen that the construction of the proposed railway would be a powerful factor in the future policy of Central Asia. It was thought that the construction would be cheap, and the line easily protected, while it would exercise a wholesome counterpoise to the 1,200 miles of undefended frontier which Russia is always holding forth to Persia as an unanswerable menace. The success of the Trans-Caspian railway, commercially, shows how necessary is a line of this kind for the development of the country, and the circumstance that the country through which it would pass is very much the same as that lying north of Afghanistan, gives promises of commercial success.

The construction of that railway as far as Nushki is now completed.

I arrived in London on 9th March in a wild snow-storm. During the summer it was decided that the state of Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's health would not allow of his return to Persia, and Sir Frank Lascelles<sup>1</sup> was transferred from Bucharest to Tehran as

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir Frank Cavendish Lascelles, G.C.B., G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., His Majesty's Ambassador at Berlin.

His Majesty's Minister and Plenipotentiary. I accompanied him to his new post, which he reached on 14th November. I would here say that I enjoyed the pleasure of Sir Frank's generous and genial hospitality all the time I was with him at the Legation in Tehran. He was received in audience by the Shah on the 16th, and made a most favourable impression on His Majesty. I was present on this occasion, and the Shah remarked pleasantly on my having kept my promise to return to Persia.

Sir Frank was burdened at once with all the trouble attending the unfortunate episode of the Tobacco Regie monopoly, the particulars of which I told in "Persia Revisited."<sup>1</sup> On 10th December the popular agitation against that monopoly reached a crisis, and abstention from smoking, in obedience to the moullas' decree, became general among the troops as well as the people. The next day it was stated that the movement had extended to the Shah's household. Placards in plenty were posted up, railing at the Shah, and threatening the Firangis (Europeans). On the 18th, the Shah's draft proclamation of cancellation of the monopoly was communicated to the moullas, who were not, however, prepared to withdraw the prohibition to smoke without sanction from Mirza Mahomed Hassan, the High Priest of Samera, Kerbela, with whom telegraphic communication was maintained. On the 27th, the proclamation was posted throughout the town, but as the police were suspected of fostering the agitation, military guards relieved them at certain places. I accompanied Sir Frank to an interview with the Shah that day, when references were made which indicated that the popular excitement had ceased. But suddenly, on 4th January, a riot broke out in the town, caused by the attempted arrest of the leading popular moulla, Mirza Hassan Ashtiani, whose adherents

<sup>1</sup> Published in 1896.

assembled and raised a tumult in the bazars. In attempting to quell this disturbance the Deputy-Governor of the town and his officials were assaulted and beaten, and then the mob assembled threateningly at the Shah's palace. The Naib-es-Sultaneh, Commander-in-Chief (brother of the Shah), was sent out to calm the people, but his appearance had quite the opposite effect, and he was forced to run to escape their fury; with difficulty he reached a place of safety, and then ordered his guard to fire on the mob, of whom four were killed and two wounded. The Shah, on hearing of this, had his numerous palace guards reinforced by a regiment which could be trusted, and shut himself up in the "ark," the inner refuge.

The next day, the 5th, I accompanied Sir Frank to the Shah's palace to see the Prime Minister, who had been kept there all night. We heard that the townspeople, under the leadership of the moulla, Mirza Hasan Ashtiani, were greatly excited over the events of the previous day, and had demanded the immediate departure of the Tobacco Regie people, compensation in money for the relatives of those who had been killed and wounded, and a general pardon for the rioters, all which the Shah in Council had granted. We found the palace full of armed men: weapons of every sort and kind, from the Parthian bow to the latest breech-loader, had been brought forth for the general arming. It was evident that every one felt bound to make a brave show, and the effect was almost ludicrous. Even the pipe and coffee boys were braced and buckled up with belts and daggers, but like many of the others, they looked more ready for flight than fight. The whole place seemed in a state of siege, and the precautions taken before we were admitted signified the utmost fear and alarm. The mob outside were civil enough to us, and made way respectfully when asked to do so by our Legation couriers. This



spoke well for the good feeling of the people generally towards Europeans, and proved that the placards threatening all Christians and unbelievers were but nonsense talk of violently zealous theological students and irresponsible fanatics, who at such times of religious excitement are difficult to control. Later, when I was preparing to leave Tehran for the south, I was told that the Persian Government had some doubts as to the advisability of my journey at that time, fearing lest in consequence of the late excitement over the Regie, ill feeling might be displayed towards me. But I made my journey without taking any of the extra precautions recommended, and I found that the idea of such being necessary was quite wrong. Everywhere on the country roads I received the salutation "Salam alaikim"—"Peace (safety) to thee"—or its equivalent in other modes of expression. In the towns, villages, and caravanserais, where I came much in contact with the people, I was always well received, and saw no signs of disrespect or disfavour.

On the riot extending through the bazars the people flocked to the mosques, where meetings are generally held in times of popular excitement, and the Imam Juma (Chief Priest) went to the great Shahi (royal) Mosque to address the people. He ascended the pulpit, and was in the midst of an impassioned oration urging loyalty to the Shah, when a shouting mob, bearing the bodies of the men who had been killed by the palace guard, entered, and roused the whole congregation to fury. The preacher, who, being son-in-law to the Shah, was not of the popular party, was forced to flee before a storm of violent abuse of himself and all his relations, male and female. This ugly display of popular fury added considerably to the Shah's fears, and brought about the Government's decision to grant what the opposition moulas had demanded for the people; and in order further to restore order, the Government made a request

through our Legation that the Director-General should at once issue a public notice to the effect that the Tobacco Regie had ceased to work in Persia. The Director-General's reply was that on the Persian Government giving a letter communicating their decision to cancel the concession, and pay an indemnity, their request would be complied with. This arrangement was carried out.

At the interview with the Prime Minister, Sir Frank asked me to mention what I had observed regarding the garrison of Tehran and the feeling among the soldiers, and with his permission I proceeded to explain that as the army was not regularly paid it could not be relied upon to support the Government. I showed that of the nominal Tehran garrison of five thousand little more than half were present, and working, as very many of them did, among the people at daily labour of every kind, in order to earn a living, or something small wherewith to eke out the pittance from long arrears of pay which they occasionally received, it was difficult to believe that they would act loyally. I said they would probably obey orders on the first impulse, but with a continuance of trouble, they would break away to plunder and then disperse to their homes. The Grand Vazir smiled when I said that, employed as so many were as small money-lenders, butchers, bakers, and shopkeepers, it was not to be expected that they would fire upon a crowd which contained their debtors and friends who helped them towards a livelihood. He signified approval of my remarks, and said he wished they could be repeated to the Shah.

I accompanied Sir Frank to an audience of the Shah four days later, viz., 9th January. His Majesty talked of the recent events, and explained that the arrest of the turbulent moulla, which was the immediate cause of the riot on the 4th, was from *trop de zèle* on the

part of his brother, the Commander-in-Chief, who was also, *ex officio*, Governor of the town. After a long conversation, Sir Frank said that I, a well-wisher of His Majesty and his Government, would, with his permission, state what I knew about the troops in garrison, and the army generally, and then I repeated what I had said to the Grand Vazir. I added what I had since learnt regarding a late large consignment of breech-loading rifles from Vienna, with ammunition and accoutrements, being stored in a Government caravanserai, close to the walls of the city, under a nominal guard of about fifty men, of whom quite one-third were absentees, and said that in the present state of popular excitement, the temptation to arm should not be offered. The Shah was good enough to say that I had spoken well, and we heard two days afterwards that these spare arms had been removed to a fort 3 miles from the city, also that a considerable sum of money had been provided for partial payment of arrears to the garrison. While speaking to the Shah, I had in my mind what had been said by the men of the Tehran city regiment which His Majesty had reviewed a few days before the outbreak in the town. In order to stimulate their loyalty he reminded them that they ate the bread of the Royal Kajars, the ruling dynasty. That same day, the men's rejoinder, spoken in a low voice on parade and heard only by a few bystanders, was known throughout the bazars: "The Shah forgets that we haven't eaten his bread for nine months past," alluding to their pay being nine months in arrear. But none of these men had the courage of their opinions, as was shown by a poor Bengali horseman in the following story, which was told by an Indian Jemadar to a party of native soldiers who were comparing the honest and regular payment of troops in the English service, with the custom of long arrears in Asiatic armies. The Jemadar's story was: "The

Raja of Moorshedabad once asked what that was that did not happen last year, has not happened this year, and will not happen next year? And the chiefs, and the merchants, the astrologers, and the hakims, could give no answer; but a poor horseman stepped forth, and having kissed the ground, and put his forehead to the earth, rose, and folding his arms in the attitude of respect, said: 'May Your Highness' shadow never be less, and may you live a thousand years, as long as your father the sun, and your brother the moon, but Your Highness did not pay your servants last year, you have not paid them this year, and Your Highness' people therefore cannot expect to be paid next year.' With a low salam the man retired, expecting doubtless to lose his ears, but on the contrary, the Raja ordered him a 'khalat' (dress of honour), and that year he paid the army its arrears."

As the Shah had expressed a wish to have a military report concerning his Turkoman frontier on the Russian boundary, and it was of advantage to us to have the latest information from that quarter, it was arranged with the Persian Government that I should go there, and travel from the Caspian to the Afghan border. When all my preparations were completed, the Russian Legation protested to the Persian Government against my visit to the Turkoman country, saying that my presence there would certainly excite the Turkomans, and might produce serious disturbances. The Shah had good reason to fear disturbances there, for these were generally caused by agents from the Russian side, and accordingly he suggested that my visit should, for the present at all events, be postponed. We were prepared to show that it was necessary, in the interests of Persia, to carry out what the Shah had himself proposed, but on the matter being referred to the Foreign Office, the answer was, not to irritate the Russians, and therefore to postpone the

journey. Accordingly, it was arranged that I should go to the south of Persia, and I made a tour *viâ* Yezd, Shiraz, Isfahan, and Khonsar, visiting *en route* the Arab, Kashkai, and Bakhtiari tribes. This occupied me during the months of April, May, and June. I was amused to hear afterwards of the suspicions of the Russian Legation as to my real movements, it having been said that I had purposely become lost to view in the great salt desert, and was probably working up towards the Herat corner of the Afghan frontier, so as to traverse the Turkoman country from that side to the Caspian, reversing the plan of route which had been countermanded.

I began this journey by driving 92 miles to Kum in a dogcart, doing the distance in two days with four horses. Much progress had been made in the construction of the road since I passed over it in November 1890. I rode post to Kashan, 68 miles, on the third day, 4th April, and there joined my caravan which I had despatched from Tehran on 26th March. After a day's halt to put all in travelling trim, I started on the 6th for Yezd, by the road which more or less skirts the great salt desert of Central Persia all the way. From what I had read and heard of the travels of others along this road, I was inclined to think that the villages and cultivation had enlarged and extended of late years: the natural increase in population had resulted in more labour being expended in tunnelling to conduct water from untapped sources at greater distances. Water is the great wonder worker in these sandy tracts, converting the bare and barren into fertile fields and fine fruit gardens. The villages are really few and far between; in fact they are oases in the desert, and the great stretches of sterile land between them, bearing merely a scanty covering of camel thorn, and forage and fuel plants, form a dreary, desolate waste. There is a great absence of wild animal life in these waterless



AT YF/D: SHIPS OF THE DE SERA.



wastes—both bird and beast. Ominous-looking ravens are occasionally to be seen hovering about in close attendance on sorely distressed beasts of burden which have been abandoned to their fate, and show signs of dropping never to rise again. I noticed a steady traffic along the road from Yezd in large caravans of camels, mules, and donkeys, carrying to the north, henna and cotton and silk goods. All about the villages were to be heard the lively lays of innumerable larks singing to their nesting partners in the green fields below, for it was then the song season of spring. Some of the villages are in clusters, with extensive cultivation in carefully built-up and well-tended terraced fields, and gardens of pomegranate and fig, almond and vine. The pomegranate is a favourite fruit in Persia, as its special keeping qualities allow of the year's crop being stored and remaining fresh till the next season's is ripe. At intervals along the road are underground water-tanks, with open channels and covered ways leading to them for storage of rain water. These are works of benevolence, built as thank offerings for success in this life, or for hope of happiness in the hereafter.

Maibat, the eleventh stage on this road, is a place of some interest. It is divided into Old and New Maibat. The former stands on the edge of a plateau, with an old fort perched high in the centre. The fort is apparently of great age, and probably of the Zoroastrian period. Part of the interior resembles a beehive, half-buried in the ground, with galleries of cell-like rooms above and below, evidently the barracks of those days. All the available flat spaces in Old Maibat were under wheat, showing singularly rich crops growing on the garden grounds and earthen courtyards, terraces, and even house floors of the old ruins. New Maibat is built on the lower plain under the old town, and, viewed from above, displayed a lovely spread of cultiva-



tion, with well-kept house courts and fruit gardens. There is a large group of flourishing villages round about Maibat, with an abundance of water, brought by underground and surplus above-ground channels from sources supplied by the snow-capped Sherkoh mountains, 30 miles distant. In the Yezd district water is conveyed by these underground channels from very great distances, some of them, owned by the Yezd townspeople, being marvels of industry and ingenuity, bringing water from distances of 30 miles and more. No pains are spared to extract every possible drop of water from the heart of the hills, and as a result the sandy plain around Yezd is able to yield very fine crops, and fruit in abundance. The desert there has been made literally to blossom as the rose, Yezd being famous for its rich rose gardens and production of the rose-water and attar essence, so much in demand in the East.

Between Maibat and the next stage, Ujatabad, there was considerable wheat cultivation on the higher plateau, but the villages and fields further on, where the land dips, were being rapidly covered with shifting sand. The set of the wind which moves the sand is from the adjacent mountains, and the fields and houses on that side of the villages were entirely buried. On the lee side, some houses remained habitable, and a few fields held crops struggling hard with the choking sand. At Ujatabad were two large rose gardens, where the manufacture of attar and rose-water was being carried on. Here the shifting sand, advancing steadily and slowly by a rippling movement over the sandhills under the close action of a low surface wind, had evidently threatened to destroy the gardens, and they were protected by very high walls, so high that it was a wonder they stood. They had been well planned, however, with very broad bases, and narrowing to quite a top edge. These walls had arrested the forward

sand flow, and turned its course round the sides, thus protecting the fields behind them, and driving the sand to force its way on to the desert beyond. I found the rose garden, in which I got house accommodation, in full bloom, and picking going on, with the rose-water distilling apparatus at work. Here, for the first time that season, I heard the nightingale. The rose garden was appropriately tenanted by several pairs, and the small boys engaged in rose-picking told me all about their nests, eggs, and young. There is a great demand in the towns for young male birds, which, by being taken early, are brought up to sing in captivity, this, I believe, being rarely the case with the European bird. The shopkeepers in the towns like to have their pet birds by them, and in the pairing season the caged nightingales may be heard all over the bazars singing sweetly and longingly for the partners they know of by instinct, but never see.

At Ujatabad, for the first time after leaving Kashan, I saw the plough at work, and that was an experiment, with ponies yoked. Everywhere along the road I had seen the soil broken up and turned by the spade, and owing to the steady hand-work and evident plentiful food, the peasants there are of a very robust and superior type. An observant Persian gentleman remarked to me that in Persia, wherever the conditions of husbandry demand the hardest labour, the peasants are in every way better off, and of finer physique, than in places where tillage facilities are greater, and the crops more easily raised.

I found Yezd a busy centre of trade, and a place of meeting of English and Russian goods in close competition. It is noted for its weavers, its dyes, and its dyers, and cotton cloth is imported in large quantities, to be dyed and exported with the locally-made fabrics. Cotton twist is now largely imported from Bombay, and goes with local threads to swell the great output of cotton cloths, for which Yezd is famous. These, with

its silks, are sent all over Persia, and even to Baku and Askhabad, in Russian territory.

There are some thousands of Guebres (Parsees) in Yezd and its surrounding villages, engaged in trade, agriculture, and weaving. They are very laborious, and generally successful in their daily occupations of life. Among them are some rich merchants who have close commercial relations with the prosperous Parsee community in Bombay, and own a large share of the import and export trade of Yezd. By ancient custom and local law they are condemned to suffer some rather degrading disabilities. The maintenance of this law is a matter of keen personal interest to the official and priestly classes, as it places the Parsees at their mercy, and compels them to seek protection and exemption from annoyance by means of money. The well-to-do Guebres, as humble supplicants, are a source of permanent profit and easy income to their private and official protectors.

But as a persecuted race, the Parsees are better off than the Jews, for being generally in good circumstances, they are able by a judicious use of money to secure for themselves more favourable treatment than their fellow-sufferers at the hands of their common oppressor, the Mahomedan. There were at the time of my visit about two thousand Jews in Yezd, employed chiefly as weavers, and in the preparation of the gold and silver thread which is used in the manufacture of the rich fabrics for which the place is famed. In Persia the Jews are comparatively poor, not being allowed any facilities for becoming rich. Efforts have been made from time to time to secure practical observance of the late Shah's desire to grant religious liberty to all his subjects alike, and this was carried out at Tehran, but it has been found difficult to enforce the gracious example in the provinces. Fanaticism and greed combine there to maintain the old oppressive law.

Yezd is a great Babi centre : it is said that quite one-half of the Mahomedan population are Babis, known or declared among themselves, or secret sympathisers. Their numbers are increasing, and the cruel murders which took place in 1891 brought forward many new members of the sect. The Babis say that one martyr makes many proselytes. They have been called seceders from Islam, but they claim to be only advocates for Mahomedan Church reform. They have been persecuted and punished in the cruellest fashion, even to torture and death, under the accusation that they are a dangerous body who aim at the subversion of the State as well as the Church. But better counsels now prevail to show that the time has come to cease from persecuting these sectarians. They say they desire to return to original Mahomedanism as it first came from the Arabian desert, pure and simple, and free from the cruel intolerance that killed the loving spirit of faith, hope, and charity which they believe it originally breathed. They are peaceful and quiet, and seek to soften the hearts of those who persecute them by showing that they but wish for peace on earth and goodwill to all men. They have a widespread organisation throughout Persia, and many moullas and syuds, generally the most learned, have joined them. The Babis may yet take a great part in the regeneration of Persia. They have a confident belief in themselves : one of them said to me, "Of every five people round the Shah, two, if not three, are of us."

I had fully intended to go on to Kerman from Yezd, but a bad accident, in which I received a severe cut on the head, with other cuts and bruises, made me change my plans. The cut on my head was so long in healing that, as I was without a companion on the road, I feared to run the risk of being laid up amidst the dirt and discomfort of a caravanserai on the farther desert journey to Kerman. I therefore decided to pass on to

Shiraz by the short Aberkoh desert route, and I left Yezd on 23rd May for Taft, the first stage out. On the mountains between that place and the desert, I saw flocks of uniformly terra-cotta coloured goats, so like in colour to the soil and rocks, that at a little distance movement could only be observed in the mass. This is the result of special breeding, so as to produce the soft underdown which comes with winter cold of an even, delicate, light-brown hue, for use in the manufacture of the very fine felts which Taft is noted for. In the same mountains are the famous marble quarries of Turan-Pusht, worked since many centuries, the stone from which is carried far over Persia for ornamental and memorial purposes. This marble is like Oriental alabaster, of a close grain, free from veins or spots, very translucent, and showing in transparency a delicate cream tint. I saw beautiful pieces used as grave headstones in the village burial-grounds, through which the afternoon slanting sun showed a soft shine of light.

I crossed the Aberkoh desert on the 26th, 34 miles over an extensive flat of earth, salt, and sand. In the centre is a salt lake with glistening encrusted surface. As the desert is said to be a great robber haunt, a number of travellers, who had delayed at the last village for caravan company across, attached themselves to my party for protection, saying in compliment that there was always safety with the "Firangi." I observed that the villagers on both sides of the desert were all well armed, chiefly with Shiraz-made percussion guns, and among them were several sportsmen, who told me that at certain places and seasons the wild ass was to be found in some numbers on the borders of the desert. They said it was an exceedingly wary animal, but they occasionally were successful in their hunts, and as the flesh is tender and good, they were able to sell it profitably as a delicacy. It was

evident that a European was a rare sight in the Aberkoh villages, and I was accordingly an object of eager gaze and keen curiosity, the women especially seeking every excuse to pass and pause before my open quarters, in order to see the face, and observe the ways of a Firangi. I sometimes found this curiosity a help in finding the way out of villages in the early morning start, as the women on the look-out over the courtyard walls would point to the direction, in answer to my enquiry.

In passing on from the desert to the uplands I was able to notice very clearly the manner in which the hills are being lowered, and the plains raised, by the steady action of wind and weather. The hills, being of bare friable rock, crumble away throughout the year from the effect of heat and frost, rain and snow, and seem to be rolling down to the sloping sandy plains, which appear to run as a great wave upward on a shelving shore. The plains where I observed this are about 5,500 feet, and the hills about 8,000 feet above the sea. Eventually, in the long, long run of time, all will be levelled up, the hills disappearing in a billowy plain.

At a distance of 40 miles from the Aberkoh desert I arrived at Dehbid, on the regular post road from Tehran to Bushire, and my eyes were refreshed with the sight of the splendidly maintained Indo-European telegraph line which passes along it. I had occasion to observe then, and at other times, the admirable work done by the European line inspectors of that service. They have charge of the various extended sections, and their duties generally necessitate isolated residence in lonely places. They must be prepared at all times, and in all weathers (the day heat is great in summer and the cold is intense in winter), to move out and repair the line when interruptions occur, or snow and storm partially damage it.

Some of these inspectors are known to acquire a good knowledge of the language and of local affairs, in a manner which makes their services more than usually valuable, and this is often of advantage both to travellers and neighbouring villagers. The fact of the Telegraph and all its establishment being under British protection naturally gives importance to the inspectors in charge, but public opinion goes further in conceding the right of "sanctuary" to those who seek asylum in the Telegraph premises. An instance of this within my knowledge occurred at Isfahan in 1890, during the murderous attacks led by fanatical moulas against the Babis, when a number of them, pursued by a blood-thirsty mob, claimed "sanctuary" in the Telegraph Office there, and were allowed asylum. A proof of confidence in the word and work of the local European inspector was given just before I arrived at Dehbid. The migration of the nomads from the lowlands to the highlands was then taking place, and a party of unruly Kashkais, choosing to interpret some "bazar" rumours from Tehran regarding the Shah's health, which they heard there, as meaning his death, proceeded to indulge in threats of robbery and violence. They prefaced all by saying, "The Shah is dead," this conveying to them and others a good excuse for the lawlessness which used to prevail in old days between the death of the king and the accession of his successor. These men refused to pay for food and forage for themselves and their horses, and began to take what they wanted by force. The reply to all remonstrances was, "The Shah is dead; go away before worse happens to you." In despair, the villagers went to the Telegraph Office, and begged the inspector to help them. This he did by interviewing the nomads and informing them that the Shah was not dead, but well and strong, and that he, by means of the telegraph wire, had daily and hourly certain knowledge of all that happened at

Tehran. A short talk convinced them that this was true, and they settled their small account amicably with the villagers.

From Dehbid I passed along the post road to Shiraz, visiting the tomb of Cyrus and the ruins of Persepolis on the way. I need not attempt to describe the ruins of the stately courts of Persepolis, which, in the days of its glittering splendour, during the reigns of Darius and Xerxes, was the talk of the ancient world. His Royal Highness, the Rukn-ud-Dowleh, brother of the Shah Nasr-ed-Din, and newly appointed Governor-General of Fars, was then about entering his province near Dehbid, and was moving down slowly with a large camp, and a following numbering about twelve hundred. Immediately on crossing the provincial border the whole camp was, according to custom, to be provided with free food on a liberal scale, and I saw at Dehbid the requisitions for the supplies to be furnished there. These were causing much perturbation to the villagers on whom the burden to provide was laid. As I passed down the road I met many local dignitaries and officials hurrying up to meet the new Governor-General, and among them, the Kawam-ul-Mulk of Shiraz, a notable of considerable inherited wealth, which had been increased by the opportunities given him as Governor of Darab and other places. He was also hereditary Begler Begi (Mayor) of Shiraz. The late Governor-General had left the province in March, and the Rukn-ed-Dowleh had sent one of his own people to act as deputy until his arrival. This official had been busy with reports on the Kawam's modes of making money, which went to show that he was fair game for his master to hunt down. In the old, old time, "Darius the King" used to hold his Court at Persepolis on Nao-Roz, the time of the Vernal Equinox, to receive the reports of his officers and the tributes of his subjects, and His Royal Highness the new Governor-General had the conceit



to follow this great example. He therefore held his first provincial Court there on the 7th and 8th May, to receive all those who had come forth to welcome him, and to accept the gifts and purses of gold which are presented on such occasions. He was displeased with the Kawam, and found fault with him for coming with a large following: it was known that he would have equally found fault had he come with a small following, on the ground that he showed a want of respect. These were the days when the provinces were farmed and governorships sold to the highest bidder. The Rukn-ed-Dowleh had been obliged to pay heavily for the Fars appointment, and he had hoped for a large sum in gift from the Kawam to recoup himself in part, but was disappointed. It soon became evident that the Kawam was in disfavour, and rumours at once went about as to his coming downfall. His quick-witted partisans said that the wolf from the north was hungering for an excuse to beat and eat the Shiraz sheep (even *they* could not compare their Begler Begi to an innocent lamb).

I reached Shiraz on 5th May, and remained there a week. The weather was delightful then, and I observed that the climate of that favoured place is so temperate and equable as to bring together the birds and fruits of the East and West, North and South, for there the plump little Indian "bulbul" and the "hoopoo" meet the European nightingale and the cuckoo, and the fruits range from apples to dates. I had heard the nightingale all the way over from the oases in the desert near Yezd. The coming of the new Governor-General was the general subject of conversation at Shiraz, the people fearing that their interests would be sacrificed to satisfy the great number of hungry place hunters, sons, relatives, and others who were accompanying him. His Royal Highness not having reached Shiraz previous to my departure,

I went to visit him in his camp, which I found to be of semi-royal style. It contained sixteen carriages for him and his establishment that had been driven all the way from Tehran, for the few portions of the direct post road from Tehran to Shiraz which carriages cannot pass along, can be turned by side routes, and thus the Governor-General was able to travel all the way in a barouche : it was necessary that he should do so, for he was unused to horseback, very unlike his brother the Shah, who rode well to the last.

After paying this visit, I passed away north towards Isfahan, travelling by the Kashkai highlands. But before entering on a short description of that journey I shall tell what befel the Kawam-ul-Mulk (Begler Begi) of Shiraz, owing to the new Governor-General's displeasure with him. The expected blow fell shortly after in Shiraz, when, on various pretexts, he was adjudged guilty of contumacy and other imaginary offences, and cruelly maltreated. He was bastinadoed, received a severe blow on the mouth to enforce silence, and was then imprisoned. It was said the contumacy alleged against him consisted in resisting payment of an arbitrary fine of great amount. His son, the deputy Begler Begi, took sanctuary in a mosque, and was able to communicate with the Shah by telegraph, on which His Majesty ordered his brother to release the Kawam. The order not being immediately obeyed, information was conveyed to the Shah (who was then in camp in Irak), whereupon the Sartip (Colonel) in charge of the Telegraph Office at Shiraz was instructed by the Grand Vazir to take the Shah's telegraphic order in person to the place of imprisonment and see it obeyed. The Sartip carried out his orders resolutely in defiance of local authority, and took the Kawam out of prison, who at once proceeded north to lay his case before the Shah. Thus the new Governor-General became the unconscious means of showing the people

of Shiraz how well the institution of direct communication with the sovereign, founded by Darius the King, worked, even against the interests of the Shah's brother. And the people also remembered that His Royal Highness had studied to take to himself some of the prestige and privileges of Darius the King, by holding his first provincial Court at Persepolis.

Regarding direct communication with the Shah, the Persian Telegraph Department has a peculiar importance in being the secret agency by which His Majesty is served with an independent and daily report of all that goes on throughout the country. The system of direct reports of the conduct of governors by special resident officials, which was established in the days of Darius the King, has developed into the present secret service daily telegrams. The telegraph enables the Shah to make his presence felt in distant places as well as his power, and I know that the late Nasr-ed-Din Shah was in the habit of occasionally summoning a governor to the office at the other end of the wire to hear his words spoken on the spot. I remember in 1892, when a band of Turkoman mounted robbers had revived the terrors of the old days as related in Morier's "Haji Baba," by raiding up to the high road between Tehran and Meshed, the Shah ordered the attendance of the Governor of Shahrud, through which place the road passes, at the telegraph office there; and when that official announced in metaphor his abasement on the earthen floor, the message came direct to him as spoken by the Shah: "You fool, you son of a fool, you father of fools!" (really expressed in untranslatable language) "while you are sleeping off the effects of debauchery, my subjects are suffering," etc., etc.

The Shah was opposed to the degrading punishment of the bastinado being applied to men of rank, and, moreover, it was his policy to protect the wealthy old families, with traditional influence among the people,

against the rapacity of the provincial governors. The Kawam's position in the province of Fars was a high one. There had been Kawams in Shiraz for centuries, and the poets, Sadi and Hafiz, wrote of them as local Magnates in their times some hundreds of years ago. The Kawam had a large and strong following, for he was also Chief of the Il-i-Khamseh, the "five tribes," Turk and Arab, furnishing contingents of both horse and foot for military service. There was no one tribal head whom all would obey, but they held well together under the Kawam.

I made the acquaintance of Nasrulla Khan, the Chief of the Kashkai tribe, who was in camp near Shiraz, and arranged with him for my journey towards Isfahan by the nomads' summer pasture grounds on the Sarhad route, which lies over lands at an elevation of 6,000 to 8,000 feet. I rode out from Shiraz, 20 miles, to visit him, and after a quick change of clothes, went to his camp by appointment, meeting on the way a hundred of his mounted tribesmen, well equipped and armed with Martini rifles, whom he had sent to escort me. It was a warm May morning, and after the formal reception, he called for refreshments, which consisted of tea and Bass' ale. On seeing my pleased look of recognition of the Bass red label and the sparkling ale, he explained that being strict in his observance of Mahomedan prohibition of wine, he could only offer me a choice of tea or simple ab-i-jao (barley-water), which, he said with a smile, he believed to be a temperance beverage in England. He told me that when he couldn't get English beer he took the Russian substitute made in Samara, which, of course, I knew to be good strong porter. He added that he preferred the English ale, and he drank two bottles to my one during my short visit. Nasrulla Khan appointed Kara Beg, one of his best agents, to accompany me through the Kashkai highlands, and I found him most capable

in causing seeming difficulties to disappear. He, in common with many of the nomads, made no pretence of being a total abstainer, and had an opinion on the merits of the best Shiraz wine. He was also keen to form an opinion on good whisky, and when we parted he wheedled me out of two bottles, which he said he would use as a specific against many ills to which he was subject.

The trade caravans generally follow the Sarhad route during the summer months, on account of the good grass and cool climate. They make short stages and long halts to allow of the pack animals enjoying the abundant grazing. I passed on the way the mausoleum of Imam Zada Ismail, with a most flourishing village belonging to it, at an elevation of 8,500 feet. The chief inhabitants are priestly Sheikhs, guardians of the Holy Shrine and the rent free lands with which it is endowed. These lands are all devoted to vine cultivation. The vineyards were beautifully kept, and well walled in, and the bushes looked as if they were tended by those who understood their culture well. Surprising energy had been shown in clearing the stony ground, and much patient labour had been bestowed on the garden-like enclosures. Nowhere in Persia had I seen such extensive vine cultivation in one place, and hillside clearing was still going on for further planting. Raisins are largely made and grapes are exported—Kara Beg, who seemed to know well, said that the specially good grapes are used for wine, but not in the village. I fell in each day with crowds of Kashkai nomads, flitting with all their belongings, mares and foals, flocks and herds, to pass the summer on the cool green uplands. The valleys and plains were studded with blocks of their black tents, and the fallow lands were alive with ploughs at work for the October sowings. The Namgan plain was the prettiest green tract I had seen in Persia, with long stretches of soft

close turf. A stream wanders sleepily through it, and loses itself in a great morass and forest of tall reeds. This morass is one of the places tradition tells of in which Bahram, the Nimrod King of Persia, was caught and engulfed while following his favourite sport of hunting the "gur"—the wild ass, said to be one of the swiftest of wild animals.<sup>1</sup>

The Kashkais are a powerful military nomad tribe of agricultural as well as pastoral habits. They sow wheat and barley on the high-lying lands, and rice in the low country. Their winter resorts extend from Behbahan, north-west of Shiraz, to Bundar Abbas, in the south-east, a very long stretch. All the pastures on that line are not theirs: others share them, but there is no confusion, as the boundaries of each section and tribe are well defined, and known by long accepted custom and recognised landmarks. They proceed to lay down rice in certain of the lowland places immediately on arrival, and gather in the harvest before they leave in March. They find their winter crops, which were sown before they left, well above ground when they return to the highlands, and as the weather warms they attend to their irrigation. They reap these crops in July and August. The Kashkais are great horse breeders: the breed is small, active, and hardy, just what is wanted for the riders, who may be generally described as of medium height, light weight, and wiry frame. A heavy man is seldom seen among them, nor a fat man. Extreme dryness

<sup>1</sup> Omar Khayyam, when moralising over fleeting human greatness, says in allusion to the Hunter-King's death in a deep sinking morass.—

"In the halls where Great Bahram drank deep,  
The foxes whelp and the lions sleep;  
Great Bahram was wont to catch the 'gur,'  
Now behold Bahram caught by the 'gur.'"

Omar makes play here with the word "gur," which means both "wild ass" (onager) and "grave."—T.E.G.

of climate, rough living, and much moving about combine to keep them spare. Both men and horses show great powers of endurance on long journeys over rough roads, and they work well on scanty fare and the lightest covering for night cold. The Kashkais would be in their element as mounted infantry. Superior horses are bred, some of them being fine big animals of a high quality, but this can only be done by the chief and his well-protected relations, for with others, immediately a specially good colt is known of, it is demanded for, or by, some one in authority. I have heard elsewhere that as the possession of a known good and unblemished colt or filly means losing it, owners fire so as to disfigure, and make it appear as if done for strain, weakness, or excess growth of some sort. The blemish is thus expected, and is often found to protect the property.

I had been in correspondence with Isfendiar Khan, the popular chief of the powerful Bakhtiari tribe, regarding a visit to him, and I arranged to carry this out from Isfahan. I travelled by the Rukh pass, the main entrance to the Bakhtiari country, and was met there by three musketeers, one of whom, a fine-looking specimen of a rough Highlander, came forward, and with the easy manner of a free mountaineer, sang out to me, "Khosh amaded" (welcome). Shortly afterwards, Isfendiar's youngest brother, Yusuf, met me with a mounted escort, and conducted me to excellent quarters in Kahwa Rukh, a large village town of nearly a thousand houses. Isfendiar arrived the next day with three other brothers and four hundred horsemen. I rode out 5 miles with Yusuf to meet them, and on seeing me approach, the horsemen formed line and advanced in this order, with Isfendiar and his brothers in front of the centre. The chief was conspicuous in wearing the Persian black lambskin cap, all the others having the tribal round

white felt. The men and horses made a good show, and Isfendiar told me that among them were representatives from every section of the tribe, sent to acknowledge and welcome him as their Ilkhani (chief), for he had been recently so appointed by the Shah; and he was glad that my visit was made at that particular time, as it had a favourable significance in the eyes of his people. The Shah can raise whomsoever he chooses from the lowest to the highest position or post, except in the most powerful of the military tribes, where the nomination to chieftainship is confined to the elders of the two leading families, who represent the direct descent from one head, the one family being in opposition when the other is in power. The monarch may, by his influence or direct power, alter the succession, and place an uncle in the position of a nephew, and sometimes a younger brother over an elder, but the head of the tribe must be of the family of their original chief. The Shah had but lately deposed the old chief, Haji Imam Kuli Khan, and replaced him by his cousin, Isfendiar Khan, whose father, Hussein Kuli Khan, had been chief before the Haji. The Bakhtiaris are an interesting and romantic people: they are of the most ancient Persian descent, and have held their hills and valleys from time immemorial. They are the most numerous and powerful of all the military tribes, and are noted for their superior martial qualities, both as horse and foot. They served Nadir Shah well in his conquering campaign in Afghanistan and India.

I parted with my pleasant host, Isfendiar, and his Bakhtiaris on 4th June, and left for Tehran, *vid* Faridan, Khonsar, Mahallat, and Kum, with the hope also of meeting the Shah's camp *en route*. I travelled over rolling downs, rich in pasture, with large fields of corn sown broadcast. These fields were bright with the blue corn-flower and the wild



red poppy, beautiful to look at, but bad for the crops. One of my stages was Chadagan, the territorial headquarters of the Faridan regiment of infantry which I saw at Ahwaz in December 1890, and the colonel of which I described as being exceptionally good to his men. He had given me an invitation to visit him at Chadagan, but I then had seen little chance of travelling that way. Isfendiar Khan had told me of him marching up from Arabistan with his regiment, on completion of their two years' service away from home. But though disappointed in seeing him, I was fortunate in finding his son there, Abbas Kuli, a young major in the regiment, whom I had also known at Ahwaz, and he made me comfortable for the day in his father's house. The large village was the colonel's property, favourably situated in the centre of a well-watered, fertile tract. Great numbers of sheep were to be seen on the pasture lands, the black and white being carefully kept in separate flocks.

Khonsar is a busy town, with a good bazar well supplied in every way, and with all the handicrafts at work, including saddlers and gunsmiths. The great gushing springs, which issue from the hillside at the upper end of the town, form, with its grand shady walnut trees, a very pretty sight, and give the place, on a hot day such as it was when I arrived, a wonderfully pleasant look. It stands at an elevation of 8,000 feet, at the foot of a high precipitous range which rises immediately behind it, a range which at that time, 7th June, carried plenty of snow. The valley below the town is rich in cultivation and fine walnut trees. I lodged in the house of a Haji who had lately made the great pilgrimage to Mecca and Jerusalem. He had liberal views on most matters, and said that they all feared and disliked moulla rule. He spoke of the religious liberty they longed for, and ended by saying, that if Persia were blessed with

the full freedom allowed in India, it would be found that the Babis make up more than half of the population, as the many who agree with them in secret would at once openly declare their belief. On the 10th June I went to Mahallat, a pretty place high up in an elevated fertile valley, with an abundance of fine walnut trees. The Shah's camp had been there for a week, and left its mark. As my baggage mules passed through the village, the sound of their jangling bells brought out women and children to look and enquire who the traveller was, and when told he was a Firangi, the women said that was a blessing, for the Firangis paid their way, and gave no trouble. They had feared it meant a return of some of the Shah's people, of whose visit they had had too much: they had eaten all their food, they said, and cleared the fields like locusts. Advantage was then taken of the opportunity to charge me famine prices for all supplies.

Mahallat is closely associated with the name of Agha Khan, the last spiritual head and leader of the Ismailiya (sect of Ismail, son of the seventh Imam) who resided in Persia: he was a descendant of Hassan Sabbeh (college companion of Omar Khayyam), who in the eleventh century formed the sect into a band of fighting fanatics, similar in character to the Dervishes of the Soudan under the Mahdi. Their enthusiasm in carrying out the will of their chief knew no bounds, and blind belief in him and his words gave them courage to face death in any form. For him they committed deeds of assassination which had the effect of deterring all who attempted to defeat and disperse his robber band, known as the Hassanis (assassins). Agha Khan took up his residence at Mahallat, and after varied experiences, first as Governor, and afterwards as a fighting rebel, he fled to Kandahar about 1840. He was there of some service to the Indian

Government in the first Afghan war, and at its conclusion was given an annual allowance, with permission to reside in India. He settled in Bombay, and took keenly to racing. He was very successful on the race-courses of Western and Southern India, as the owner of Indian Derby and other winners. He was a well-known character at the Poona Meeting, and there, in 1862-63, I made his acquaintance. Having his sectaries at Baghddad, he had the means of obtaining Arab horses of the best blood for racing purposes. The family in Bombay continued to keep a racing stable to a late date.

Ismailis, known in India as Khojas, are found over a great part of Asia, and in Egypt. I have already mentioned that I found them among the people of Wakhan and Sirikol, and heard of them in the other secluded small states on the upper Oxus. I met at Mahallat Abul Kassim Khan, grand-nephew of the late Agha Khan, who was residing there in charge of the landed property and the interests of the family. He told me that a deputation went every year to Bombay, to receive the annual allowance granted by the Agha for the support of the descendants of old followers who reside at Mahallat. Agha Khan lived to a great age, and died about 1877. He was succeeded, as head of the sect, by his son, Ali Shah, who, dying about 1890, was succeeded by his son, Sultan Mahomed Shah, now so well known in London as "The Agha Khan." The family, at the time I was at Mahallat, 1892, was on friendly terms with the Shah, who was pleased to accept the valuable presents occasionally sent by them. Among these was a very fine elephant with splendid trappings, which used to make its appearance with one or two others belonging to the Shah, on gala days at Tehran. Agha Khan spent the income received in offerings, as befitted the head of a religious order, but his son, Ali Shah, as a provision

against possible change of feeling or fortune, accumulated part, and invested judiciously in house property at Bombay. This was animadverted upon, and the present head, Sultan Mahomed Shah, has returned to liberal observance of the demands of charity, generosity, and hospitality.

On the 12th June I crossed the mountain range above Mahallat, and descended to Kum, where I arrived on the 14th. The heat by day was great, and for the first time during my journey I had to travel by night to avoid it. The same great heat continued to Tehran, and I was glad to find myself in the cool summer quarters of the British Legation at Gulhak on the 20th. The discomfort of heat, without any appliances to mitigate it, was much aggravated by the plague of black flies, sand flies, and mosquitoes, which swarm in the caravanserais in summer.

I ascertained during this tour that as many and as good men and horses, well fitted for the purposes of war, can be found in the south as in the north of Persia. It had been generally supposed that the best fighting men were of the northern provinces, but this was due to the fact of the British officers, who were lent from the Indian army in the early part of the last century, having been employed in the regiments raised there, and which at that time mainly composed the Persian standing army. This was a result of the reigning dynasty belonging to the north, and having little knowledge of, or confidence in, the people of the south. It was obviously the policy of the Persian Government at first to keep the foreign officers in their service under their immediate observation in the north, and thus no opportunity was given them of ascertaining the military qualities of the southern tribes.

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## CHAPTER XI

(1892)

WHEN I came back from my journey in Central and Southern Persia, the Shah was established in the Shimran highlands, within easy distance of the various legations occupying their usual summer quarters on the cool mountain slopes, and I had ample opportunity to study the characteristics of people and the condition of things at the Royal Court. To me, Nasr - ed - Din Shah appeared an interesting typical king of a nomadic race. Up to his fifty years of reign he was remarkable in retaining all his physical and mental energies: his health was excellent, due no doubt to his nomadic life and simple habits. He was passionately fond of the chase, and passed much of his time in the saddle. It could well be said of him, as of the ancient Persian monarchs, that the Royal edicts were written "At the stirrup of the King," for his Vazirs had to accompany him to the hunting-grounds, and this prevented the Court becoming lapped in luxury. He never seemed to sigh for the pleasures and advantages of high civilisation such as he had experienced and seen in his European tours: he certainly enjoyed the change on those occasions, but he was always glad to go back to the "rest and repose of Persia." I remember a newspaper account of his return from the last tour of 1889, in which it was mentioned that he shed tears on crossing the

Russo-Persian frontier, and said in sorrow, "Good-bye to civilisation." If tears were shed, they probably were of joy on coming home. It was known that he secretly welcomed the Russian request for postponement of railway construction in Persia for a considerable term of years, when this was put forward as a *quid pro quo* on the British diplomatic victory in securing the opening of the Karun river to the navigation of the world. He appreciated the advantages of railways in other countries, but did not think they were necessary in Persia, where the Eastern proverb still applies, that time was made for slaves.

Nasr-ed-Din's pleasant, easy-going disposition sometimes led diplomatists to venture on lecturing him, and then he could be diverting as well as dignified. An instance of this occurred when a grown-up lad was executed under distressing circumstances which produced unfavourable comment in the European colony at Tehran. The youth was a son of the Guardian Superintendent of the Palace, a permanent official of high position and responsibility, specially charged with the first opening and last closing of the state rooms containing the Royal throne and treasures, and giving access to the Shah's inner apartments. The lad had fallen into bad company, and having spent and lost all he could lay his hands on in drinking and gambling, listened to cunning suggestions that he might take advantage of his father's position to steal some of the palace valuables. As he often accompanied his father in the capacity of assistant, he was well known to the guards and attendants, and the idea was put into his head to secrete himself in the state rooms at closing time, and during the night to remove with a chisel or knife some portions of the gold casing and ornamental work from the "gold chairs" in the Royal reception hall. When the hall was not required for ceremonial purposes these chairs were covered with a large sheet,

which was only occasionally removed. The youth carried out the plan of hiding in the rooms, and having succeeded in wrenching off some pieces of gold during the night, passed out unperceived or not noticed when his father opened the doors in the morning. The robbery was not discovered at once, and when it became known, the agony of the old superintendent was intense, for he saw it could not be kept secret from the Shah, who would be certain to view the circumstance with great suspicion as well as anger. There was much alarm in the palace when the inmates learnt that a thief had been able to gain entrance, notwithstanding all the precautions of close watch and guard. The Shah's brother, the titular Governor of Tehran, was most zealous in trying every source of information, so as to have the credit of finding a clue to the crime, and many empty promises of high reward were made, with the result that the superintendent's son, who was known to the police as a frequenter of drinking and gambling dens, was suspected. He had been lately observed to become suddenly possessed of money, and following up the clue, some scrap pieces of the stolen gold, which had been sold in the bazar, were recovered. Then, under police pressure and promise of his life from the Shah's brother, he confessed the crime. The favourites in the palace, from selfish interest in the Shah's life, pressed for the youth's death, notwithstanding the promise that had been given. They pointed to what might have happened had a daring accomplice been with him, determined to do violence to His Sacred Majesty; and they urged the absolute necessity of exemplary punishment. The Shah reluctantly gave the fatal order: the red-clad executioners took the lad's life, and published the punishment by the exposure of the body, showing the severed throat (the usual mode of execution in Persia) on a rude bier, which they bore through the

bazars, demanding largesse from the shopkeepers, and refusing to move on with their ghastly burden until a sufficient sum of money was given. The dreadful publicity of the disgrace, and the violation of the promise said to have been made, caused severe remarks in the European quarter, and much sympathy was expressed for the poor lad's father. One of the Foreign Ministers felt so strongly on the subject that he took advantage of an audience of the Shah to mention it, when His Majesty, as was often his wont after the formal business was over, asked concerning any news in the European quarter. The Minister introduced the subject by alluding discreetly to the executioners' procession through the bazars as if it had been done without the knowledge of His Majesty or the Governor. The Shah at once accepted the veiled challenge (as he regarded the reference) to discuss the whole incident, and after explaining it from his point of view, he "turned the tables," and quietly spoke his mind to the Minister. He said that his personality was as sacred as that of any other Sovereign Majesty, and he was more closely connected with the Church than many of them, for not only was he Defender, but he was also Head of the National Faith; that his person and abode were inviolable; that sacrilege had been committed, and the criminal was judicially condemned to death. Then, suspecting that he might be accused of methods of barbarism, he proceeded to say airily that it was not so very long ago that men's lives were taken by the public executioner in the freest country in Europe for the theft of a sheep, a very little thing indeed in Persia, and in reference to the reply that all that was now changed in the West, the Shah remarked that change was slow in the old, old East.

At the time of the greatest heat that summer (1892), rumours came of a severe epidemic of cholera prevail-



ing at Meshed, a great Shiah pilgrim resort, where the worst insanitary conditions tend to make the place at all times more or less a hotbed of disease. The dispersion of the pilgrims threatened to carry the disease to the capital, and as a preventive measure a strong cordon of troops was drawn round Tehran to establish strict quarantine detention and examination. But the great salt desert on the flank of the Meshed road afforded facilities for evading the quarantine, and the city Jew pedlars managed to pass to and fro and purchase the clothes of dead pilgrims, which, eventually, were smuggled into the town. The result was a sudden violent outbreak of cholera in the Jews' quarter, whence it speedily spread all around. The disease was of a very fatal type, and its deadly ravages caused a general exodus to the adjacent villages and mountain slopes. The deaths were believed to be from eighteen to twenty thousand. I heard of some cases among the Persian infantry guard of twelve men left at our Legation quarters in the city, and on going there to ascertain, I found that of four soldiers who had been attacked, three had died: the others remained at their post. The same steadiness was observed with all the military guards in the European quarter, and similarly the troops in garrison, always reduced to a minimum in summer during the absence of the Court and the Government, did not disperse in flight as might have been expected, but continued to do their duty. They, moreover, responded well to the call for help in removing and burying the dead. The excellent conduct of the troops was the outcome of the splendid example set by the Deputy-Governor of the city, the Vazir Iza Khan. He was very wealthy, and did much to relieve the sufferings and wants of the poor who were attacked by the disease: he remained in the town while the epidemic raged, and refused to seek safety in flight as some officials had done; but sad to say he fell a victim

to cholera at the last, and his wife, who had continued with him throughout, died of the disease two days before him. I mention this specially with reference to the Persian soldier, who generally is as his leader, his superior, makes him.

And in support of this opinion I shall now relate the effect of a bad example which occurred at the same time, under exactly similar circumstances, at Astrabad on the Caspian coast, the head-quarter town of a Persian governorship, where cholera was also carried from Meshed. On the severity of the visitation becoming alarming, the Governor fled to Charbagh, a hill locality 30 miles distant, followed by all the officials, and thereupon the troops deserted and dispersed. Disorder prevailed in the town, and the lawless characters of the bazars robbed and wrecked the shops and dwellings of Russian subjects, they being the "strangers within the gate," and drove them to seek shelter in the Russian Consulate. There was no vestige of Government authority left: the Consul could see no sign of local protection, and he accordingly telegraphed an urgent call for help from the Russian Legation at Tehran, which, being unable to obtain prompt assistance from Persian sources, had recourse to Russian aid from Askhabad in the Trans-Caspian command, then under General Kuropatkin. A squadron of Cossack cavalry was at once railed to Krasnovodsk on the Caspian, and thence shipped by steamers to Ashurada, the port of Astrabad. There was no delay in their despatch and arrival, and the humour of the situation was pointed by the Cossacks being quartered in the Governor's palace, which, having been left open and unprotected on the headlong flight of its late occupants, was thus saved from the hand of the local spoiler. The Cossacks remained in Astrabad three weeks: the Russian Consul, with their assistance, restored order and confidence, and was practically the Governor of the town, and the

inhabitants regretted the return of Persian rule. The Cossacks went back by land to Russian territory, advantage being taken of the opportunity to march right through the intervening Persian country, occupied by the Turkomans who owe a divided allegiance, according to the seasons when, as nomads, they move with their families and flocks from one side of the border to the other, for summer and winter pasture. As a foreseen consequence, the sight of this march and the news which accompanied it greatly increased Russian prestige on the Turkoman frontier.

Various reports were current among the foreign legations concerning this remarkable incident. One, a likely explanation as to the delay on the part of the Persian Government to make an early effort to restore order at Astrabad, was, that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had mislaid and forgotten the urgent representations from the Russian Legation, until the presence of the Cossacks in Astrabad became known to the Shah by a direct report. It was said that the Minister in question, being of leisurely and unmethodical habits, when transacting business and sitting in Oriental fashion on the carpeted floor, with his papers all about him *sur le tapis*, was accustomed to put away *sous le tapis* those that related to matters which required reference and consideration. He considered the Russian communications in question calling for immediate action to be such as required deliberate thought, and in the process of thinking the deliberation became delay. He continued to think over the matter, and doubtless smoked over it, and slept over it. The weather was warm, the Shah was away shooting in the mountains, cholera was all about, and there was much confusion everywhere; and in the meanwhile Russian interests at Astrabad had necessarily to be protected by Russian troops, owing to the disgraceful flight of the authorities and the garrison on the outbreak of cholera. Here the

Persian soldier simply followed the example of those set in authority over him.

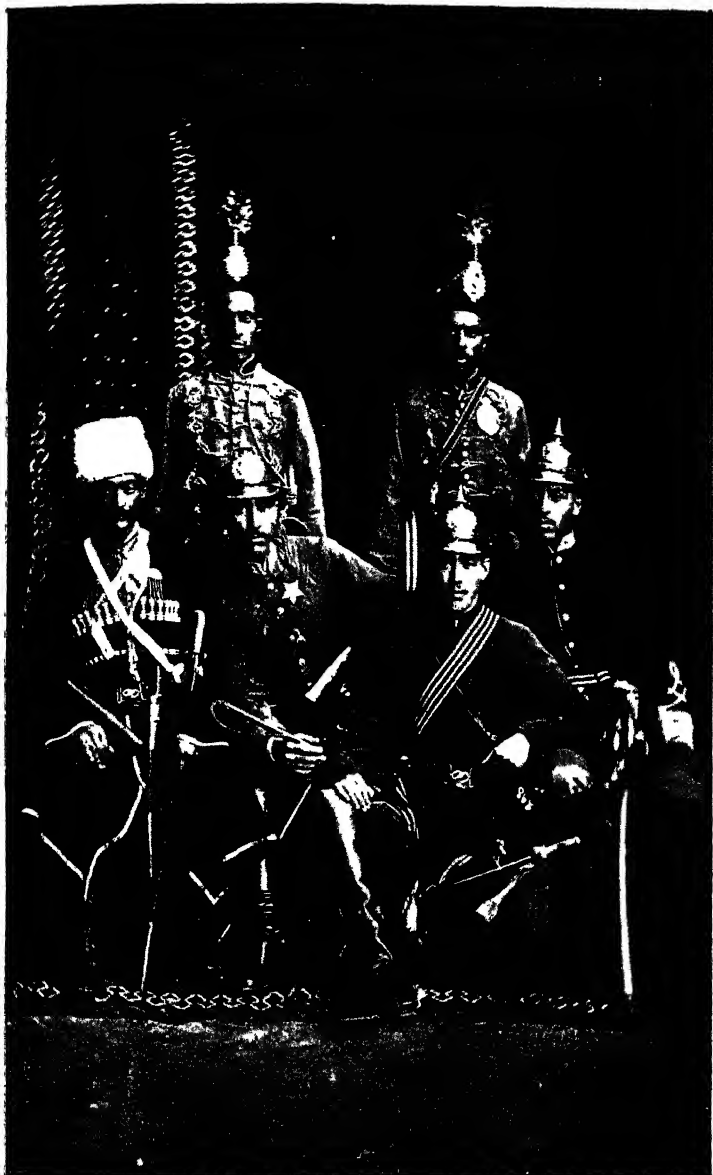
And now I come to speak of the Persian army and the Persian military system. The organisation is, theoretically, good, but it is never carried into effect except on paper. No one, from the Sipah-Salar (Commander-in-Chief) down to the Sarbaz (soldier), ever thinks of attempting to adhere to it. The Army administration is so bad, that for reform to have practical effect, thorough radical change in its character and management is absolutely necessary. The first essential is, regular pay to be guaranteed to the soldier by the Central Government, and the second is, honest officers. It may be said that while the Army system is good in theory, its practical excellence is directed towards the perfection of the pay accounts. This means that the best machinery is employed in the manufacture of accounts, and such is the intricate nature of these, and so powerful is the influence of those who benefit by them, that any attempt by a just and energetic War Minister to secure regular and honest payment to the soldier, would at once recoil upon himself by a strong combination being formed to defeat his efforts, and drive him from office. As in Civil life it is the peasant cultivator who has to pay for the luxuries of the governing class set in authority over him, so in the Army, the soldier is plundered to pay for the palaces and pleasures of those in high command. Great freedom of speech is permitted in Persia, and I heard very open remarks made concerning the manner in which the Army administration secures its personal profits. The speakers said that a perfect system of illegitimate payments centred in the War Office at Tehran, an office so well organised that complete tabulated information regarding every regiment is forthcoming if required; that there, regular muster-rolls of every corps are sent, and a crowd of clerks employed to examine and check

would be of little use against hostile neighbours. The material is excellent, and under an honest system of good treatment and regular pay they could very soon be worked into first-class rank and file. But it is hardly likely that an effective organisation of native growth will spring up to develop and utilise Persia's natural military resources. The late General Sir Henry Rawlinson, who served as an instructor and commanding officer in the Persian army, wrote in 1879:—

“Their are no people in the world who offer better rough material for military purposes than the Persians: the physique of the men is admirable, and their powers of endurance are great; their general intelligence and personal courage are beyond all praise. If the Persian material were placed at the disposal of a European power who would encourage and take care of the men, and develop their military instincts, a fine working army, very superior in my opinion to anything that Turkey could produce, might be obtained in a very short period of time.”

Sir Henry had said previously, in a lecture at the Royal United Service Institution in 1858, that it was “impossible to avoid foreseeing that as any European war becomes developed in the East, the military resources of Persia must be called into action. In fact it seemed that we could not have a more formidable engine of attack and defence launched against India than a Persian army commanded by Russian officers. In the same way we could not have a more efficient instrument of defence than the same army led by British officers, or by officers acting in our interests.” Sir Henry Rawlinson evidently regarded the actual military capabilities of Persia as likely to play some part in future political developments in the Middle East.

The strong body of troops of all arms which the eldest son of the late Shah organised at Isfahan, and



GROUP OF PERSIAN OFFICERS, ISFAHAN ARMY, 1888.

*Sevraguine photo* ]

[ *To face page 310*



maintained there in an unusually efficient state for several years previous to 1889, showed what can be made of Persian soldiers under a fairly good system. His Royal Highness was supposed to be brooding over his supersession as Heir Apparent, and had recourse to "playing at soldiers" as a distraction. He went to work at his military amusement with such earnestness that he formed a "model army," which the Shah thought was too numerous and too good to be quite safe for the peace of the country. The leading spirit of this army was Karim Agha, a Kurd of Erzerûm—a man of great energy and natural ability, with strong military instincts—and as the necessary funds were forthcoming, he soon created a well-trained, well-equipped, and regularly paid force of all arms, ready to act at the call of the Prince Governor. Ambition and over-weening vanity led to imprudent talk among his partisans, and there was a popular idea of encouragement from Russia's great rival in Persia in the fact of the high decoration of Grand Commander of the Star of India being sent to the Prince in November 1887. There were rumours also of presents of arms and money accompanying the decoration, and this belief was firmly held by the Heir Apparent until I assured him to the contrary, at Tabriz, in the end of 1892.

The late Shah became jealous or suspicious of the Isfahan army in 1887, and advantage was taken of an opportunity which offered of giving him a Russian officer's opinion concerning it. This opportunity was probably one of design rather than chance. The captain of the Horse Artillery Battery attached to the Tehran Cossack Brigade had been on a journey to Southern Persia, and on the occasion of a review of the Tehran garrison by the Shah, he was presented to His Majesty as having lately returned from Isfahan. The Shah, never a critical observer of soldiers, was



always well pleased with his own, and he confidently asked the Russian officer if he had seen any troops in the south equal to what had just passed in review. The discreet but telling reply was that the Prince Governor of Isfahan had a very efficient body of troops under his command, and the Shah became an interested listener to the captain's description of what he had seen. Curiosity and suspicion having been aroused, the Shah summoned from Tabriz a European officer attached to the Heir Apparent's Court, who had long been in his service, and whom he thoroughly trusted, and sent him to Isfahan to bring back a true report. The Prince Governor had made himself fully acquainted with the object in view, but such was his self-assurance that he went out of his way to openly recognise the officer's mission, and to magnify the importance of what had impressed competent observers, with the result that his pride had a severe fall. The Shah was then contemplating the lengthened tour in Europe which he made in 1889, and doubtless thought that the Isfahan army might become a danger to the Regent during his absence: he therefore ordered the reduction of the troops composing it to the moderate limits really required for provincial purposes, and further directed the well-filled arsenal to be emptied of much of its stores. The son was constrained to submit to his father, and being forbidden his military hobby, he turned his mind to the means of making money, with such success, that he is now credited with having amassed a considerable fortune, which is safely invested in foreign securities.

Whatever drill, or discipline, or efficiency is still found in the soldiers of the Shah, may be said to have sprung from the seeds which were so laboriously sown for thirty years in the early part of last century, by the exertions of English officers. It is interesting in a way to know that the right company of infantry regiments is still



PERSIAN INFANTRY, ISFAHAN ARMY, 1888

*Sevraguine photo* ]

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known as "Bahaduran," corresponding to "Grenadiers," and the left as "Mukhbiran," the Scouts, meaning the "Light Company"—the skirmishers—after the old manner of our infantry. And as a curiosity I observed that they had retained, and applied in their own way, what was taught of the funeral exercise in reversing arms at the halt, as I noticed in the month of Moharram, when Shiah Mahomedans mourn Hussein, the martyred head of their faith, that the military guards piled arms with the muzzles downward. What may be called the present military system of Persia was introduced by Abbas Mirza, the son of Fateh Ali Shah (great grandfather of the present Shah), and Governor of Azerbaijan, who had English officers of the East India Company's army as instructors for his troops, one of whom was the late General Sir Henry Rawlinson. Abbas Mirza<sup>1</sup> spent much pains and money on his regular troops, whom he fondly hoped would some day chase the Russians from Tiflis; but Paskievitch's campaigns of 1827 and 1828 dissipated his hopes, and brought the Russians to Erivan. Sir John Malcolm, who was ambassador from the East India Company to Abbas Mirza's father, vainly tried to dissuade the Prince from raising regular troops, pointing out to him that the revenues of the country were insufficient for their maintenance in a state of efficiency; that from want of good officers he could never make them equal to the Russians; and that the irregular cavalry, which was the chief strength of Persia, would probably be neglected to provide for the new levies. And afterwards a Russian officer, who served in Paskievitch's campaigns, said that it was "an easy matter fighting the Persians now, to what it was in the last war (1809): then," he said, "we never knew what it was to rest. The Persian cavalry was ubiquitous, and it was no

<sup>1</sup> Article on "Army Organisation among Oriental Nations," by Colonel F. H. Tyrrell, 14th Madras Infantry.

use trying to bring them to a fair fight: they were here to-day and gone to-morrow. Now we sleep at our ease, and can always find their army when we want it." Abbas Mirza would not listen to Sir John Malcolm's words of wisdom, but time has proved their worth. The splendid and numerous irregular cavalry which Persia possessed in the last century (eighteenth) is a thing of the past, and instead of it she has a poor imitation of a European standing army, badly officered, badly equipped, badly paid, and badly organised. The great want of the Persian army is that of all Oriental armies—an efficient and trustworthy body of officers. (This remark cannot, of course, apply to the Japanese.)

In 1890 the late Shah spoke of measures to encourage and increase the tribal horse contingents and the irregular cavalry, which had been somewhat neglected, also to substitute militia battalions for some of the regular infantry regiments; but His Majesty's proposals took no definite shape, and the national forces are at present what they were then. There is a considerable number of irregular levies—horse, foot, and in certain districts, "camel-men"—under various territorial designations, all rated as "Cherik" (militia) under tribal organisation. Among these the Kurdistan levies form a really good force, armed with breech-loading rifles; they probably turn out as mounted infantry. There is ample evidence to show that, notwithstanding long deferred and much reduced payment, the Persian military service is really popular. The military instinct is strong among the people, and they take a pride in belonging to the national army. As an instance of this, I here quote from a report I wrote at Tehran in 1890:—

"The Sangur Kuliai tribe in the Kirmanshah district used to furnish a corps of five hundred irregular cavalry, and a regiment of infantry. The late Governor, for some grave misconduct on their part, punished the

tribe by disbanding these corps, which, however, are still shown in the Provincial Government books, and their pay is annually provided for. The loss to the tribe of this service is regarded by themselves and others as a disgrace, and has much affected its importance. They would gladly come forward again if called to arms."

The Persian Cossack Brigade was first formed in 1878 under Austrian officers, who took over as a nucleus the "Mahajir" Cossacks, men who, as the word implies, were refugees from Russian territory. They were dressed and equipped as Russian Cossacks, and received somewhat higher pay than the Persian cavalry. The Austrian officers left at the end of their three years' service contract in 1880, the usual difficulties in regular issue of pay causing dissatisfaction to them and their men. It was said that a question then arose as to the necessity of European officers for the brigade, but experience soon showed that the Mahajir element was not so well controlled by the Persian as by the foreign officer. Arrangements were accordingly made through the Russian Legation for Russian officers, which at first the Mahajirs were inclined to resent, declaring that having become refugees to escape from the Russians, it was impossible for them to serve under the new officers. But when it became known that the change brought with it an engagement on the part of the Government to issue the pay punctually, they hesitated to leave a corps where they were well treated, and finally decided to remain, with the result that they found every reason to be well contented with their Russian officers. In the new contract the stipulation had necessarily to be made for the regular issue of pay to the brigade, and under the powerful protection of the Russian Legation, the commandant is able to take his own measures to produce and issue the pay of all ranks on pay day, when it is not forthcoming from the Persian

Government. The old habits of unpunctuality and deferred payment almost always prevail in the Paymaster-General's office to compel the commandant to exercise his power to borrow from the banks, in order to fulfill his engagements to the men, and in course of time, the Government has to repay both capital and interest. The Persian Treasury, however, has been better supplied of late, and the Cossack Brigade pay may now be more punctually provided. There can be no doubt of the keen military spirit created and fostered by the Russian officers in this brigade, and of the readiness with which the men would spring to obey their Polkovnik (Colonel). Deprived of their foreign officers, they would speedily deteriorate. A proof of this was given in 1888, during the Yamut Turkoman disturbances in the Astrabad district. As the Persian troops were being sorely beaten on all occasions by the Yamuts, the Government arranged to despatch three hundred of the Cossacks as a reinforcement and an encouragement to their own regular troops. It was contrary to Russian policy on the Turkoman frontier to take part against the Yamuts, and accordingly the Legation interfered to prevent Russian officers accompanying the detachment. The Cossacks proceeded without their Russian leaders, and the result was that they shared in the general defeat.

The Persian military system is interlaced with the provincial land taxation system in a very intimate manner, and I shall here attempt to explain the connection. Soldiers are raised from each district for the territorial regiments in proportion to the taxation. In the Faridan district, for example, each payer of ten toman (the toman was formerly equal to seven shillings) in taxes has to provide one soldier, and pay him from three to four toman in cash, and one kharvar weight (600 lbs.) of corn annually, whether on duty or on half-pay at home, in order to induce him to

take up military service. When the village has no single tax-payer of ten tomans, the amount is divided up into ten one toman sections, and the individuals making up the total payment have to combine to bring about the desired end. Colonel and soldier all get this village money and grain allowance on the same scale, without any difference on account of rank. This means equality of all in liability to serve or provide a substitute, and may be called conditional conscription. Different localities pay different sums on this account, but the average is about five tomans. The actual amount of the cash payment varies according to the wealth of the locality, and the dearth or otherwise of candidates for military service. The soldiers of the Derejgin regiment, for instance, receive from one to one and a half tomans, while those of the Sedeh or Jelali regiment get twenty tomans, the price of labour in the locality governing the amount. In Azerbaijan there are places where fifty tomans are paid, and in the Isfahan district, one hundred has been known to be paid. This annual payment (which is subject to revision) is in addition to the 600 lbs. of corn given annually, representing a supply of flour or meal to leave at home in order to enable the soldier to absent himself from his family, of which he may be the only breadwinner.

If the regiment has been mobilised, half the soldier's pay is paid locally to his family, and half to himself at the place where he is stationed. Thus the pay of the Faridan regiment is provided for in the Isfahan budget, and the Government of Isfahan debits the Faridan deputy farmer of the taxes with the amount in his accounts, Faridan being the place where the regiment was raised, and this place of origin is always charged with the payment of half the soldiers' pay, which charge is met from the local revenues. Whether the soldier is on service or at home, the Faridan



deputy farmer of the revenues should pay him the moiety of his pay chargeable on the revenues, and as the officers and soldiers are all payers of land revenue, this half-pay is accounted for under that head. The other moiety of pay is made over to the soldier at the place where he is serving with the regiment. This system applies to all ranks from the colonel to the soldier. The general rule of service for the regiment is the proportion of one year's duty on full pay to two of furlough at home on half-pay. Under this Army system there are no State pensions to officers or soldiers, although there is a very remarkable gratuitous pension system, which I shall mention later. Besides his pay, the soldier, from the day he leaves his home on duty, receives a daily ration of 3 lbs. of corn in addition to the grant to his family. The officers also receive rations and forage allowances whilst on duty.

The mobilisation of a regiment is a great opportunity for money-making after the manner of the Persian official. Suppose a regiment is summoned for duty in Khorasan; the colonel, accompanied by his deputy, the lieutenant-colonel, proceeds to the territorial headquarters (where the paymaster always resides, busy with his muster-rolls and pay-sheets), and begins the operations necessary for assembling his men. Those who have means, and to whom the summons is inconvenient, bribe the colonel to exempt them from service, or else to allow them to send a substitute. Sometimes the soldier pays the colonel to obtain his complete discharge. When this is done, the colonel makes a demand for a substitute, but the locality has to pay a sum of money to the colonel to obtain his consent to the substitution, although he accepted the arrangement by private bargain with the retiring soldier, without the participation of those who are called upon to pay for his consent to the substitution.

The consent may cost from five to one hundred tomans, according to the locality. It happens sometimes, even often, that out of a strength of eight hundred men, two hundred obtain their discharge in this manner, and the various localities have to pay "consent" to a similar number being substituted to replace them. Another source of profit to the colonel is the item "desertions and deaths," for which consent to substitution has also to be paid. "This is a tune," my informant said, when speaking of these golden opportunities, "upon which the colonel can play any variation; the greater an artist he is, the greater the harvest he reaps." When all these matters are settled, the regiment is marched to the provincial depot for uniforms, tents, and arms. If an inspection is made, substitutes for absentees are hired, or obtained with the friendly assistance of another regimental commanding officer. It is well understood that officers help one another on such occasions. Thus the colonel of the Derejgin regiment would ask the colonel of the Ferahan regiment for the loan of two hundred men in order to bring his corps up to "inspection strength."

The men arrange for their own transport by clubbing together to purchase donkeys, which are very useful also in their foraging expeditions off the line of march. When finally started for their station, those men, who have provided themselves with funds to support applications for permission to return to their homes on "urgent private affairs," approach the colonel discreetly, through the serjeants and captains, and obtain leave of absence. The company officers and serjeants, who as a rule all belong to the same localities as their men, always participate in the payments which pass from the soldier to the colonel. The section "vakil" (serjeant) is an important rank in the company. There are four

in each company, and they work direct with the "sultan" (captain); the "naib" (lieutenant) is of no account if not in command, and the work is simplified by dealing with the vakils, who are in immediate touch with the men. The word "vakil" implies importance, as it is used to denote any rank or position from ambassador to factor: a person skilled in any business, pleader or spokesman. Vakil-ed-Dowleh, Agent of the State, is a high official rank in Persia. Accordingly, the Persian soldier makes a point of conciliating his serjeant when he desires to obtain a favour from his captain or colonel. He trusts him more than his officer, and always associates with his comrades to employ one to secure the home half-pay being paid to his family when he is absent with the regiment. The officers know very little about drill when first called out for service, as there is no annual mustering or training when the corps is not embodied, but they soon learn the little that is required of them from the officer instructor, trained at the military college at Tehran, who is sent to join the regiment on the mobilisation order being issued.

When the regiment reaches its destination, the routine regulation is that it should be inspected by the Governor, who will see that pay and rations are issued in accordance with the muster-roll of men present. If the Governor is a man of strong character, he retains for himself the money represented by the difference between the number of men actually present and the number which should be present; but if he is weak, the colonel pockets the difference. Generally speaking, they go into brotherly partnership over the profit, and share it equally between them. After this perfunctory inspection, the regiment is usually split up into small parties, and distributed in the villages and districts on nominal guard and garrison duty. There the men provide well for themselves

at the expense of the "rayat" (cultivator), and often become so well off that they do not care to ask for their service pay or rations, which become the perquisites of the officers. If the soldier under these circumstances finds the villagers submissive, he plunders them, but if unable to do this, he hires out his services as a labourer, or becomes a shopkeeper, butcher, or usurer. The money changers' stalls in the towns seem by prescriptive right to belong to soldiers, who are generally recognisable as such by some portion of their dress. They lend small sums at a monthly rate of interest equal to 120 per cent. per annum, and appear to have the privilege of beating defalcating debtors, their comrades making common cause with them on such occasions. These soldiers are a thrifty people, and they often return to their villages when the regimental term of service is over, well contented with their earnings. They all combine to have representatives in their villages to see that the local half-pay to which they are entitled is given to their families, and this helps to maintain a certain popularity of military service in the country districts. It is a characteristic feature of this weak administration which permits such irregularities, that the peculations are practised on the soldier only—the officer, even the lowest in rank, can take care of himself, for though obliged to wait long for his pay, he generally gets a share of perquisites which produce ready money.

What I have here stated is perhaps an extreme case of irregularities on the mobilisation of an infantry regiment, but I believe they often happen more or less as described. I am aware that the attention of the Persian Government has been directed for some time past to the glaring faults of their military administration and system, but the Shah knows well that reform, to be sure and certain, must be slow and gradual;

for change in Persia, with its old ways and long memories, cannot be effected at one stroke. The Shah's Government has carried out successfully and advantageously for the State the abolition of the farming system in the Customs Department, and they are now engaged on much-needed reform in the system of national finance which is not only ruinous, but absolutely hinders progress and prosperity. There have been several changes of Prime Ministers since the present Shah came to the throne, but this has not interrupted the movement towards reform. The three last holders of the office of Grand Vazir, covering, up to date, ten years, have all been "progressives." The first of these, the Amin-ed-Dowleh, began a system of financial reform which, however, had no chance of success, owing to the want of capable assistants. The second, the able and sagacious Atabeg Ali Asghar Khan, conspicuous by his energy and talent, carried through most successfully the valuable Customs reform, which in some degree has provided a Treasury worthy of the name; and the third, who is now in office, the Ayn-ed-Dowleh, a statesman of strong character and good ability, has already proved himself to be a determined reformer. He enjoys much influence with the Shah, and thus strengthened and supported should be able to overcome any opposition to his policy of gradual reform in the finances and administration.

A late member of the Persian Government once said to me that the curse of their financial system was the army of "mustaufis" (controllers of accounts), who fed upon the finances, and ate up the substance of the country. He spoke of the crowd of these artful plunderers who infested the Government offices, and ingratiated themselves with officials by becoming intermediaries for the embezzlement of public money. He said they had a system of correspondence with all the

provincial offices, and worked upon the influences which lead to corrupt practices and baneful patronage. I have already alluded to the intricate mode of accounts in the head offices at Tehran, which is calculated to puzzle reformers, and drive them away from the path of knowledge. One of the richest fields for the mustaufis to work in is that of the permanent State pensions or annuities, granted to favoured individuals from provincial revenues, without the pretence even of work done for the State, and carrying with them no service or obligation. These are simply Royal gifts to favourites, and sometimes appear in the form of an order to pay from a source unnamed, until an opportunity of doing so is created or found. Mustaufis studied the revenue returns and ascertained what provinces could bear further burdens of this nature, and in course of time every available source of income was fully drained. Then came the time when vacancies had to be sought for, thus appreciating the ever vigilant mustaufis' opportunities of assisting hungry candidates, who possessed influence to over-ride the expectations and so-called claims of others. Though the provincial revenues are much burdened with these annuities, yet there is no tendency to lessen them, as a brisk business is carried on between candidates and influential officials, by which the former, in competition, offer to accept less than the assigned amount, and even forego the first few years' payment. The result is a shrinkage of the surplus revenues payable to the Central Treasury, and thus the absolute necessity to preserve some balance has compelled an enquiry into the authenticity of the provincial payments to the annuitants shown in the accounts. The Finance Minister's deputy, M. Naus, the clever Belgian official who helped to carry out the Customs' reform, is now engaged on these pension lists, and has his agents at the head-quarters of each provincial government, examining the titles to the annuities and verifying

the existence and identity of those who receive them. This is but the first step in financial reform, for there is much room for improvement throughout each provincial administration.

Of course, what is now being done, touching as it does the individual interests of an army of officials and mustafis, favourites and drones, has already drawn forth a great cry against the Grand Vazir, who heads the party of progress, but there is no reason to fear that the Government will turn aside from its purpose. The present Shah is anxious for Army reform, and knows that reform of the finances must come first.

The investigation of grants, pensions, and annuities, now being conducted in Persia, reminds me of the "Inām" Commission in the Bombay Presidency about forty years ago, when the land revenue returns were being revised, and enquiry was made into inām grants, the holders and owners of which were called upon to produce and prove their titles. "Inām" means a gift or present, and inām lands were free from taxation. There was much agitation raised in the vernacular press against this "act of the oppressor," and some sympathisers in England took up the cry against the Indian Government for instituting the investigation after a long lapse of time. There was a story of an enterprising M.P., who, in the course of conducting independent enquiry in India on this subject, had occasion to make a journey by the indigenous "doolie" or palki mode of travelling, with relays of bearers: he was ignorant of the language, and also of the custom of "bakhshish," under the name of inām (which is the word so used in Bombay), when one set of bearers gives way to another at the end of each stage. He noted that when he left them they held up their hands in an attitude of supplication, and ran after him calling out "Inām, inām," and he believed this meant that even the poor palki bearers joined in the popular cry against the

unjust Inām Commission. The story went that he afterwards made a statement to this effect in England. Of course the poor palki men, being disappointed of their customary inām bakhshish, ran after him begging for it.



## CHAPTER XII

(1892-1902)

I HAD now made the acquaintance of most of the prominent Ministers and persons about the Shah, and in and out of his government, and desiring to meet the Vali Ahd (Heir Apparent), Governor-General of the important province of Azerbaijan, it was arranged that I should pay His Imperial Highness a complimentary visit on the part of H.B.M.'s Minister, and travel *viâ* Persian Kurdistan and the Turkish frontier to Tabriz, the Vali Ahd's provincial capital. Of course the Shah had to be fully informed of my proposed visit to the Heir Apparent, as from the invariable Eastern point of view suspicion generally lurks in the mind of the sovereign towards his prospective successor. Sir Frank Lascelles had occasion to have audience of the Shah on 23rd September (1892), and advantage was taken of the opportunity to present me, previous to my departure. His Majesty asked me what was the object of my journey, and I mentioned all frankly, to see Kurdistan and Lake Urmia, and to have the honour of visiting the Vali Ahd at Tabriz. I also said that when the journey was over at Tabriz, I was returning to England, on my duty with the Legation coming to an end. The Shah, on hearing this, expressed his regret at my leaving the Legation. I may here say that the Turkish Ambassador, Khalil Bey, on my farewell visit to him, gave expression to the same feeling of regret. I had as a companion on

this journey the Nawab Hassan Ali Khan, C.I.E., who was attached to the Legation in Tehran, and I greatly benefited by his knowledge of Persia and the Persians, and his agreeable society.

We left Tehran on the 6th October 1892, and, travelling by the well-known Tabriz high road, reached Zenjan, a little over 200 miles, on the 15th *idem*. On the 16th we visited the Ihtisham-u-Dowleh, cousin of the Shah and Governor of Khamseh, who then resided at Zenjan. We found him suffering from two bullet wounds lately received in an attempt to arrest Jehan Shah Khan, chief of the Afshar section of the powerful Shahsevend ("Shah's Own") tribe. I have previously mentioned that the Shah can raise whomsoever he chooses from the lowest to the highest position, except in the powerful military tribes, where the nomination to chieftainship is confined to the elders of the leading families, who generally represent two lines from one head, one being in opposition while the other is in power. The wild tribesmen, however, who in feudal fashion attach themselves as eager partisans to a popular leader, are sometimes disinclined to accept his fall from favour without an appeal to arms. But the Royal authority prevails in the end, and the new chief's rule begins, and lasts just so long as Fortune smiles, and the Shah wills.

A marked instance of this was shown when the Governor proceeded to carry out the Shah's order to arrest Jehan Shah Khan, and send him as a prisoner to Tehran. The ostensible cause of the chief's removal from power was, that with his own hand he had killed his wife, the sister of his cousin, Rahmat-ulla-Khan, who was known to be his rival in the tribe. Jehan Shah had unjustly accused her of being unfaithful to him, and going to her tent, he called her out, and, notwithstanding that she appeared before him with a copy of the sacred Koran in her hand, he shot her dead

while in the act of swearing on the holy book that she was innocent. The matter was reported to the Shah, then in camp in Irak, who ordered Jehan Shah to be deprived of the chieftainship, and Rahmat-ulla-Khan to be appointed in his place. The Governor of Khamseh, in which province Jehan Shah was then located with his clan, was directed to carry out the Royal command. Much telegraphing had taken place on the subject, and as cypher was not used, Jehan Shah, by the use of money and influence, was able to obtain the fullest information of all that passed, and as he was known to have a numerous personal following armed with breech-loading rifles, the Governor was instructed to act with caution. He accordingly had recourse to silly stratagem, and gave out that the object of his journey to the tribal head-quarters was to coerce a section of the clan which had been giving trouble. He therefore asked Jehan Shah to assist him, and this gave the chief a good excuse for assembling his men. The Prince Governor took with him one hundred cavalry and four hundred infantry, but no attention was paid to the ammunition, and they started without a proper supply.

Rahmat-ulla-Khan was fully aware of the Governor's real intentions, but the influence and power of the popular chief prevented any opposition partisan gathering against him. He therefore could only depend upon the Persian troops who accompanied the Governor to enforce the order of the Shah, and was unable to do more than prepare a reception tent and provide a luncheon for the Prince and his people, a few miles in advance of their camp, at the place appointed for the meeting with himself and Jehan Shah. On approaching this place, these two, with the elders and the tribesmen, went forward for the customary ceremonial reception of the Governor; Jehan Shah dismounted and saluted with the utmost

show of respect, but on reaching the tent which had been prepared for them by his rival, he declined to enter and partake of his hospitality, declaring that he preferred to pass on to his own tents, a short distance off, his mounted following of fifteen hundred men accompanying him. The Governor knew that Jehan Shah had become dangerous from the devotion of his well-armed followers, and the readiness of the main body of the tribesmen to support him. He had evidently contemplated his arrest and seizure at the place of meeting, but the show of force and feeling in Jehan Shah's favour was too strong to admit of the attempt being made. He therefore decided to declare openly the object of his coming, and after lunch he assembled the elders of the tribe, and summoned Jehan Shah to his presence, who, however, declined to obey. The Prince, on being told this, announced his deposition, and the appointment of Rahmat-ulla-Khan in his place, showing at the same time the Shah's written command. He then appears to have indulged in some violent personal abuse of Jehan Shah, and again sent an order to secure his presence.

In the meanwhile, that chief had taken counsel with his tribal following, and finding them entirely on his side, and determined to dispute the rule of his rival, he served out cartridges freely, and went to discuss the matter with the Governor. He left most of his men at some distance, and presented himself, attended by only a few. The Prince informed him of the Shah's command, and after some contentious talk, he held out the Royal "firman" for him or any of those with him to read. On one of the elders moving forward to take the paper, Jehan Shah suddenly motioned them all back with his hands, and the Prince, taking alarm at this appearance of a signal, called out to his guards to seize Jehan Shah. There was a shout and a rush,

and some of Jehan Shah's men from behind fired over the heads of the soldiers, who, however, returned the fire point blank, killing and wounding several of the Shahsevents. The tribesmen then opened fire in earnest, and the Prince, with his troops, promptly fled. All ran and rode for their lives, pursued by the furious enemy. Some of the servants kept with their master, the Prince, and remounted him twice when the horses he rode were shot. The tribesmen made him a special target, for he was most conspicuous in rich dress, and a third time he and his horse were rolled over together, he receiving two bullet wounds. He was then seized, partially stripped, and treated with great indignity. The pursuit was kept up to his camp, which was captured and plundered; thirty-five of his men were killed, and fifty wounded. One of the Prince's officials, also wounded, was taken with him, and both were kept prisoners for three days.

A few days later, Jehan Shah, having recovered from his mad fury, trembled at the recollection of his crime, and dreading the vengeance which he knew was certain to follow, he packed up his valuables and fled with a few followers to the Caspian coast. He had the intention to escape by steamer to Baku, but, failing in this, owing to all communication with Russian territory having been suspended during the outbreak of cholera then prevailing, he determined to make his way by land across the northern frontier. Being closely pursued by a party of Persian cavalry, he abandoned all his baggage, and with great difficulty reached Tabriz, where he took sanctuary in the house of the chief moulla. He died there after enduring existence for about six months, under circumstances, and with surroundings, which must have been supremely hateful to him. I was at Tabriz while he was there, and was told by one who had seen him that he was a sad sight then, the hereditary head of

the Afshar Shahsevids, a section of a Royal tribe, herding in misery with a crowd of criminals who had sought sanctuary in order to escape the avenger of blood. On the first news of the occurrence, the Shah ordered the immediate mobilisation of the Khamseh and Kazvin regiments, and this had the effect of dispersing the tribesmen, facilitating the work of retribution, and establishing the power of the new chief. The incident had the best political result in aiding the Shah's policy of breaking up the ruling families, and the cohesion of the dangerous tribes, and asserting fully the authority of the Central Government. Jehan Shah had gradually strengthened his position by increasing the superior armament of his tribesmen (who were said to have three thousand breech-loaders) and laying in a large supply of cartridges, so that with his wealth, influence, and popularity, he must have been regarded as dangerously powerful. No doubt the conceited confidence thus produced led him to indulge in the ungovernable rage which wrecked his freedom and ended his life. The tribesmen said that the wife whom he killed was truly innocent; but, being themselves men of wild ways and tempestuous tempers, they thought he had been harshly judged, and they therefore stood by him to resist his seizure and deportation. Before the final settlement was arrived at these tribesmen must have suffered many penalties for armed resistance to the Shah's authority, besides paying heavy demands for blood money and death dues.

The opportunity which the suddenness of this incident offered to Jehan Shah was one which, had he possessed the spirit and self-reliance of the famous Nadir Shah (himself at his first start in life a "free lance" and simple trooper of the same tribe), might have lodged him in a palace instead of a prison. The capital at that time had a mere nominal garrison, the

Shah having taken away most of the troops to swell his escort in camp, over 200 miles distant. The Shahsevend tribe numbers many thousand mounted fighting men, all born, bold robbers, and the tribe ranges as far as Tehran. Had Jehan Shah, when he found himself irretrievably committed, and his life forfeited by what had occurred, determined to play a desperate game, and make for the capital, he might have galloped there with all the fighting Shahsevents at his back, and made himself master of the city, the palace, and the treasury.

We left Zenjan on the 17th, and travelling west, reached Chiragh Tapeh, in the Afshar district, a distance of 85 miles, on the 21st. We passed safely through what was then known as a robber-infested country, but our guides from stage to stage were our passports of immunity from the attentions of "gentlemen of the road." A well-armed party of these met us one day, and in passing said to our guides: "If you hadn't been here there would have been a chance for us." But against this, our host that night, a big burly man, called Sarmast Khan (Mad-head), said that to rob a Firangi who was under the Shah's protection meant the whole country being harried, and accordingly the foreign traveller is comparatively safe. He told me that he had eight sons as big and strong as himself, but they were all away from home at that time. We heard the next day that Sarmast Khan and his sons were all noted robbers. That day six Kurds, well mounted, and armed with Martini rifles, rode up to us, but made no show of molesting us or troubling our caravan when they saw our guides and ascertained who we were. Near Chiragh Tapeh is the Takht-i-Suliman, a ruined fort of very ancient date, which local tradition describes as one of Solomon's royal residences that was shared by his Queen, Belgis of Sheba, whose summer throne

is also shown on a mountain-top above. The ruin encloses a flowing geyser of tepid sea-green water (66°), 170 feet deep. Near it is the Zindan-i-Suliman (Solomon's dungeon), an extinct geyser 350 feet deep. It is now a massive cinder cone standing right up in the plain, 440 feet high. The surrounding country is of an average elevation of 6,000 feet. Here we were in an ancient volcanic region, covered with the *débris* of vast cinder cones which had been shattered and scattered by a mighty convulsion when the great geysers boiled up and burst their walls. The district was visited and fully described long ago by Sir Henry Rawlinson, and a later account of it was published by Mr Theodore Bent, who went there in 1889.

On the 22nd I visited the scene of the cinnabar<sup>1</sup> mining operations, 5 miles from Chiragh Tapeh, in a gorge of the hills, at an elevation of 8,300 feet. I saw there at work four Cornish miners and sinkers, with four other European employees of the Persian Mines Corporation, all under the able management of Mr David Ferguson, Mining Engineer. After lengthened laborious search throughout this quicksilver district, Mr Ferguson traced signs of cinnabar up to the gorge, where I found the party established, and commenced regular shaft and gallery mining operations. He appeared to have nearly reached the cinnabar vein, towards which the Arab miners had unsuccessfully laboured with great gangs of men seven or eight hundred years before. The mining work was being carried on night and day, in three shifts of eight hours each. The Kurd and Turk labourers were said to work well, and the employment was most popular with them by reason of good and regular pay. I had several washings made from earth

<sup>1</sup> Cinnabar, native sulphide of mercury, the only commercial source of the metal and its compound. The particles I saw washed out were rich reddish brown in colour.—T. E. G.



taken in the galleries in my presence, and cinnabar appeared in each. Close to the same spot there is a mine of sulphide of arsenic which has long been worked for the Hamadan market, whence the mineral is sent all over the East, being in demand for "hummam" (bath), and plaster and painting purposes. There are other mines of "zirnak" (Türki for sulphide of arsenic) in Persia, but this one produces the best. The next day I went to Kiz-Kapon, 15 miles off, to see other workings of the Mines Company. Here had been found pure mercury, but on discovering the location of the ore near Chiragh Tapeh the miners and establishment were moved there. All these operations came to end shortly after my visit, the Company deciding to cease work, as they were disappointed, like their Arab predecessors, in not finding quickly what they had traced by clear signs up to its mountain source.

The Mining Company's European employees were very popular with the people by reason of their fair and liberal dealings. I saw decided proof of the confidence which the labourers and suppliers of material had in the manager and his subordinates, when a strong demand was made by the headmen of villages concerned that all payments should pass through their hands. A noisy discussion ended in a hot dispute, and a threat to boycott the Firangis in their enterprise, signifying that the supply of labour and material required in the mining operations would be checked. The quarrel was summarily settled by the villagers themselves, who assembled to declare by unanimous vote that they desired no change in the direct dealings with their employers, and that while willing to give a small commission to the village heads, they insisted on maintaining the existing working arrangements. I was a witness to this interesting declaration of "free trade" by the Labour Party in a community of Turks and Kurds on the Perso-Turkish

frontier. I had further evidence of the miners' popularity in the neighbourhood when, two days later, I gave an old blind beggarman a two-kran silver piece. He was so astonished at this that he admiringly said to the Kurd guides and others with me: "Is he a 'Hakim' (Governor)? Or is he a Firangi 'madanchi' (miner)?" I answered, "No, I am a Firangi traveller," and he responded, "Blessings on the Firangis."

From Chiragh Tapeh we passed on to Tabriz by the Kurdistan frontier and Lake Urmia, through a well-inhabited and open country, rich in pasturage and cultivation. We met many fine fellows, Kurds and others, and enjoyed their simple hospitality. They were glad, they said, to meet a Firangi gentleman to whom they could talk freely. The following explains. I had ridden ahead of the party, and halted at a Kurd village to await their arrival, as it seemed a convenient place for breakfast. The village headman and some of his people sat with me under a tree, and we talked freely. On the Nawab joining me a short time after, I heard our Kurd host ask him quietly what military rank I held (he had noticed my field service khaki tunic with shoulder badges). On being told "Amir Toman," he said: "Ya Allah! and here he came unattended, and has been talking in the most friendly manner with us. Had a Persian Amir Toman come, we would all have been off to the hills." We found many of the villages in the Maragha district, near the Urmia Lake, largely tenanted by soldiers, chiefly artillerymen. We were told that the profession had become hereditary in some families, from which soldiers and substitutes were always forthcoming when wanted, as the high price of labour in the province produced a good annual payment from the villages under the system I have already described. It was at Maragha that D'Arcy Todd and the other English officers serving

with the Persian army over seventy years ago, collected and trained their gunners. The Peabody-Martini rifle shows largely in that quarter, as elsewhere on and near the Perso-Turkish frontier, the armed men generally carrying that weapon and a well-filled cartridge belt.

The Shiah pilgrim route from the north to holy Kerbela passes along the Kurdish frontier, and when travelling on it for several days we met many bands of Circassians and other Mahomedans from the Caucasus, journeying to that sacred Shiah Shrine in Turkish Arabia. They were almost all big men of good appearance and ruddy complexion, well clothed, well armed, and well mounted. They showed comfortable circumstances, and a pleasant independent bearing, indicating happy home life. Each band was "personally conducted" by a professional "Chaūsh," an organiser, who arranged the whole of their proceedings, and they appeared to march along the route as a well-ordered compact body, capable of giving a strong reply to armed attack. The Kurds are of the Sunni faith, and with the fanatical hatred ever existing towards the Shiah, who is regarded as an accursed heretic, there must have been much incitement in old days to rob and murder the pilgrims who are well known to be provided with gold for religious offerings, and the expenses of a long journey to and fro. And notwithstanding that the Shiah kingdom of Persia has been strong enough for a long time past to give the fullest protection within its limits, yet the old organisation for self-defence is maintained, and both Persia and Turkey allow these armed bands of foreign pilgrims to pass unchallenged through their territories. The men whom I met showed a consciousness of superiority in being under foreign protection while travelling in Persia. I said to one of them, a man of fair complexion, who took off his great sheepskin busby in



A KURDISH LADY, SOUJ BULAK, PERSIAN KURDISTAN.

*Sevraguine photo* ]

[*To face page 336.*



salutation to me after the European fashion, "Are you Russian?" and he answered with an earnest "Yes, praise be to God!"

After a very interesting journey, we reached Tabriz on 3rd November, and were honoured with an audience of His Imperial Highness the Vali Ahd, on the 5th. Circumstances had tended to increase the Prince's natural shyness, and I thought him nervous at first, but, on addressing the Nawab as interpreter, and being answered by myself direct in Persian, his apparent nervousness disappeared, and he talked freely with me. In the conversation which followed, I mentioned much in a discreet manner concerning life at the capital, which seemed interesting to him. I had the opportunity to observe the pleasing characteristics which distinguish him, and signs of the tact which kept him free from all disagreement with the Central Government. He had always been successful in keeping clear of everything that could offend the susceptibilities of his Royal father, and was ever regarded as a dutiful son and a loyal subject.

Among the great families of Tartary from whom the chiefs of the Royal Kajar tribe claim descent, much importance has always been given to the birth of the mother of a candidate for high position. Therefore, in the choice of an heir to the throne, Persia, as now represented by the Kajar dynasty, looks to the claims of the mother as well as the father, and requires Royal birth on both sides. For this reason Mozuffer-ed-Din Mirza, the second son of the late Shah, his mother being a Kajar princess, was preferred to the firstborn, Sultan Masud Mirza, known as the Zil-es-Sultan. It was customary with the Kajars to have the Vali Ahd, or Heir Apparent, at a distance from the capital, and for him to be nominal Governor-General of Azerbaijan, the richest and most important province of Persia. The mother of the Vali Ahd maintained a

dignified position of high influence at the Court of the late Shah until her death, which took place at Tehran in May 1892. During the intrigues and disquieting rumours which at one time prevailed, the strong influence of the mother of Mozuffer-ed-Din was always present to watch over his interests in the Shah's palace, and when she died his friends feared that he had lost his only good protector. But the Sadr Azem (Grand Vazir), then known as the Amin-es-Sultan,<sup>1</sup> became his ever watchful friend, and eventually led the nation to act as executors of the will of Nasr-ed-Din Shah, in securing the peaceful succession of the heir, whom he had appointed.

The Kaim-makam (Lieutenant-Governor), on the part of the Vali Ahd, entertained me at dinner, previous to my departure, and I then learnt that my visit had created a good impression. I would here mention that a few days after the Vali Ahd's succession to the throne in May 1896, he caused a telegram to be despatched to me, conveying his compliments, to which I sent a reply expressing my highest respect, and offering my best services. It was evident that he desired to have in me an unofficial friend.

I left Tabriz on 12th November, riding post to Julfa on the Russian frontier (80 miles), and arriving there the following morning. My travelling companion, the Nawab, returned to Tehran. I had to stay a day at Julfa, as I had outridden my pack ponies. I crossed the Araxes, which forms the boundary with Russia, on the 14th, and after the customs and passport examination, which was much simplified by a letter kindly given to me by M. Petroff, the Russian Consul General at Tabriz, I continued my journey by post "troitka," a three horse abreast springless cart (a terribly jolty conveyance) until Nakchivan (26

<sup>1</sup> His Highness the Atabeg Ali Asghar Khan, G.C.B., late Grand Vazir.

miles) was reached. From that onward to the railway, 240 miles, there was a well-made, carefully laid road, over which I found travelling easy, for I soon exchanged my troitka for a comfortable droshky. I had a magnificent view of Mount Ararat as I passed up towards Erivan; it had received a fresh coating of first winter snow, and stood out gloriously white in a cold blue sky. I fell in with several detachments of Russian infantry, "time expired" men returning to their homes, and I found the railway station at Akstafa crowded with them, waiting for a train to Batoum. Two young officers of the party seemed to recognise me at once as an Englishman, and introduced themselves courteously to me, and on learning that I was General Gordon, the Military Attaché to the British Legation at Tehran, and had passed through Erivan two days before, they said their regiment was there, and had the officers known of my arrival, they would have been glad to entertain me; in fact, as they put it in their wildly hospitable way, to make me drunk. They said that the name of Gordon was well known in their army, as a famous Scot, Patrick Gordon, served under Peter the Great, and was at one time Captain in the 1st Guards, the celebrated "Preobrajensky" regiment. In Russia the courtesies of the comradeship of arms are sometimes too severely pressed on those who are not case-hardened by their hot hospitality, and it is said that one of the British officers of a regimental deputation sent to salute their Imperial Colonel at St Petersburg, who found himself being forced to take more than he could carry, burst out with the French at his command: "Nous sommes venus ici pour la hospitalité, non pour l'ivresse."

I reached London on 29th November (1892), travelling by rail to Batoum, thence by the Black Sea to Odessa, touching at Sevastopol and Eupatoria, and on by rail *via* Berlin. I was on duty under the



Foreign Office till the 31st January 1893, when I retired, as I considered that I had done my full share of work abroad. I had six months previously submitted, through Sir Frank Lascelles, my application to resign my appointment, with effect from about the end of the year, and this was granted by the Marquis of Salisbury, who wrote :—

“I have to request you to inform General Gordon that it is with great regret that I accept his resignation of the post of Oriental and Military Secretary at Tehran, the duties of which he has performed with zeal and ability, and to the complete satisfaction of Her Majesty’s Government.”

Sir Frank Lascelles in his despatch to Her Majesty’s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dated Tehran, 9th November 1892, with eference to my approaching retirement, wrote :—

“General Gordon will be greatly missed at Tehran. The Shah and the Amin-es-Sultan (Grand Vazir) have expressed their regret at his departure. I am glad to have this opportunity of recording my appreciation of the services rendered by General Gordon during the time we have been together in Persia, and at the same time of expressing my gratitude for the advice and assistance he was always ready to afford me, and which his knowledge of the language and the country, coupled with his sound judgment and high character, rendered especially valuable.”

Lord Rosebery, who was now at the head of the Foreign Office, sent the above to me with the following from himself.

“I have received from Her Majesty’s Minister at Tehran a despatch (Sir F. Lascelles No. 170), of which I have great pleasure in sending you a copy, reporting the general feeling of regret in that Capital at your departure.

“I take this opportunity of expressing my own regret at your retirement from the post of Military Attaché to

Her Majesty's Legation in Persia, and my appreciation of the valuable services which you have rendered to Her Majesty's Government during your tenure of that appointment."

Sir Horace Walpole, Assistant Under Secretary of State, wrote on 13th April 1893:—

"I am desired by the Earl of Kimberley to acquaint you that the Government of India, having learnt your resignation of the appointment of Military Attaché to Her Majesty's Legation at Tehran, have addressed a despatch to His Lordship, in which they record their sense of the assistance you have from time to time afforded them during your connection with the Legation.

"They mention that you have furnished them with several useful and interesting reports on Persia, which, from your wide knowledge of the country and the people, have been of special value, and that they are greatly indebted to you for your aid in this respect.

"Lord Kimberley, I am desired to say, has much pleasure in communicating to you, in accordance with the request of the Government of India, this expression, in which he entirely concurs, of their appreciation of your services in Persia."

Immediately on my return to London I had furnished to the Foreign Office a special report concerning the Vali Ahd, and the state of affairs in Persia, and for this I had the pleasure to receive Lord Rosebery's thanks. I also had the honour to be received at the Foreign Office by His Lordship, when a conversation took place with reference to that report. Shortly after, at the request of the Indian Office, in communication with the Foreign Office, I formulated my idea of a policy for Persia on moderate lines, to begin with an increase of Consular posts in Southern Persia.

I have told how the part I took as the "candid friend" in speaking the unpalatable truth to His Autocratic Majesty the Shah on two occasions, in

October 1890 and January 1892, did not place me in disfavour, and now further, to show his special appreciation, a gold-mounted sword was sent to me in March 1893, with the following letter from the "Sadr Azam" (Grand Vazir).

"In recognition of your good qualities (described in complimentary detail) which have come under the observation of His Imperial Majesty the Shah, a gold-mounted sword from the special armoury has been bestowed upon you as a mark of the Royal favour. I therefore have the greatest pleasure in sending you this sword, and I congratulate you most heartily on being the fortunate recipient of this honourable gift. I desire also to renew to you the assurances of my highest regard."

(Signed with seal) "SADR AZAM."

I submitted this letter to Lord Rosebery, who replied that he had much pleasure in giving his cordial assent to my acceptance of the sword.

The sword is the Persian "shimshir" (Eng. scimitar) with a fine Damascus blade bearing the name of Shah Abbas the Great, who ruled over Persia more than three hundred years ago; and also the maker's name, "Assad-ulla of Isfahan."

Lord Rosebery wrote to me on 12th May 1893:—

"On your return from Persia I was anxious to mark my sense of your public services by obtaining for you some token of distinction from the Queen. I have, however, no means of doing this directly, and so I applied to Lord Kimberley, who readily agreed to recommend you to Her Majesty for the honour of K.C.I.E., and who kindly consented to my being the channel of a communication which will, I hope, be as agreeable to you as it is to me."

I was duly gazetted to this honour on 3rd June, and was knighted by H.M. Queen Victoria, at Osborne, on 8th August 1893.

In 1897 I was nominated by the Queen's command to be attached to His Royal Highness Prince Amir Khan, Sardar, cousin of the Shah, who came from Persia to represent His Imperial Majesty at the Diamond Jubilee celebration. In his suite was General Karim Khan, an old friend of mine, whom I had first met at Isfahan, where he was well known as Karim Agha, the commander of the remarkably efficient force maintained at Isfahan for some time by the eldest son of the late Shah, who had to give way in the succession to the throne. Both the Prince Amir Khan, who was of great stature, and General Karim Khan showed to advantage in the mounted procession, and, like most Persians, they rode well.

I was appointed Knight Commander of the most Honourable Order of the Bath on the 23rd of May 1900, and received the insignia from H.M. the Queen at Windsor, on the 7th of July that year. I think this was the last ceremonial investiture of the Orders of Knighthood held by the late Queen Victoria.

In May 1902 I was nominated by the King's command to be attached to His Royal Highness the Muayed-ed-Dowleh, first cousin of the Shah, who came from Persia to represent His Imperial Majesty at the Coronation, and I had the honour of being present at that historic ceremony in Westminster Abbey on 9th August 1902.

The Shah came to Europe in 1900, but his visit to England was not accomplished owing to the Queen and the Court being in mourning for the death of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. He made a short stay in Ostend, and I went there to pay my respects to him; my wife accompanied me, and was presented to the Shah on the occasion. His Majesty came to Europe again in 1902, and arrived in London on a short visit in August. I attended the Levée held the day after his arrival, and on an official of the Lord Chamberlain's

department explaining in French to the Persian Chief Chamberlain who I was, the Shah spoke out in Persian : "General Gordon? Oh, I know General Gordon well," and shook hands heartily with me. I had further opportunities of seeing His Majesty, and my friend his Grand Vazir, whom I had known since 1890. It was desired to favour me with the Order of the "Lion and the Sun" of Persia, but I gave satisfactory reasons for this honour, an exceptional one on that occasion, not being conferred on me. Later, I was informed of the Shah's intention to confer on Lady Gordon the rare and highly distinguished Persian Order, "Afetab" (Sun), set in brilliants (reserved for ladies), which in due course was transmitted through the Legation in London. (The gracious permission of H.M. the King to wear this decoration has been given to Lady Gordon.) My wife had assisted me in entertaining the Shah's cousins and representatives, the Princes Amir Khan, Sardar, and the Muayed-ed-Dowleh, who came to London as Royal guests for the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and the Coronation in 1902.

I now go back in this personal memoir to speak of my Civil occupation on the London Board of the Imperial Bank of Persia. It was considered that my knowledge of Persia and my friendly relations with the Shah and his Ministers would be of advantage to the Board, and I was elected a Director in 1893. A misunderstanding having arisen between the Persian Government and the Bank in 1895, I was deputed to Tehran to explain, and was able to assist towards the re-establishment of friendly relations. When I had arranged the matter with the Grand Vazir, I had audience of the Shah (Nasr-ed-Din), to deliver the formal complimentary and other messages from the Chairman and the Board, and after a few minutes' conversation on the subject of my mission, His Majesty said with a smile: "That is all satisfactorily ended; now tell me about the Baghdad railway." He was

anxious regarding the report that a branch line would be built to his frontier at Khanikin. I said that in the first place it would be a long time before the main line reached Baghdad; in the second, it would probably be carried on to the Gulf before the branch to Khanikin would be commenced; and thirdly, the simultaneous construction of a Persian line from Tehran, Hamadan, and Kirmanshah, to meet the Baghdad branch at Khanikin, would safeguard the frontier, and greatly encourage the extension of agriculture and commerce in those fertile districts. I also said that in the meanwhile the rich resources of the Karun valley should be used to strengthen the Persian frontier in that direction in such a manner as to create a strong flank defence against any danger he might apprehend from the Baghdad railway, and I gave a short sketch of what might be done. He ordered the Grand Vazir to make a note of it, and added that he would wish engineers from Holland to survey the district and report on a comprehensive irrigation scheme. My journey out to Persia on this occasion was *viâ* Berlin, Breslau, and Odessa, thence by the Black Sea to Batoum, and on to the Caspian. I had a severe winter journey home, *viâ* Baku, Petrosk, Moscow, and St Petersburg, reaching London in December 1895. During my stay at Tehran I was the guest of Her Majesty's Minister, Sir H. Mortimer Durand,<sup>1</sup> whom I had the pleasure of knowing in India.

Hitherto the Persian problem in relation to railways has generally been discussed from a European point of view, and I now propose to present the subject from a Persian point of view, in regard to national interests. Russia's hold over the Persian Government owing to the railway agreement and the obligations

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir H. Mortimer Durand, G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., His Majesty's Ambassador at Washington.

imposed by her financial loans, has led to the belief that she will have no difficulty in securing the necessary concessions when it suits her policy to extend her railways into Persia. Mention is frequently made in the newspapers of projected Russian lines through Persian territory, down the eastern and western borders, in connection with the Trans-Caspian and Caucasian systems. Persia would be within her rights were she to propose making these railways herself for commercial and strategical purposes, but even then, the international rights of nations, in their pacific relations with each other, would justify the adjoining states, if they saw cause for alarm, or anticipated any possible danger of aggression, in requesting explanations and assurances. In the event of Persia submitting to strong pressure and giving the concessions for such railways to Russia, there would certainly be peremptory demand by her neighbours for explanation of her action in permitting, or assisting, a great armed power to occupy a commanding position on their frontiers. It is enough to place the matter in this light to see how impossible it would be for Persia to give her *free* consent to the Russian railways in question.

In the exercise of her absolute right of self-defence against her powerful neighbours, Persia can only rely on diplomacy, and the recognised rules of international law and justice which govern the conduct of sovereign states in their intercourse with each other. But for the present, Russia may be regarded as unable or disinclined to spend millions in order to satisfy vague political ambitions, and therefore time may be given to Persia to encourage the introduction of foreign capital for the construction of commercial railways, where trade and traffic promise good returns. I would premise, however, that it will be necessary for Persia to show satisfactory progress in the path of

administrative and financial reform, before capitalists are likely to take the risks of railway enterprise in her territory.

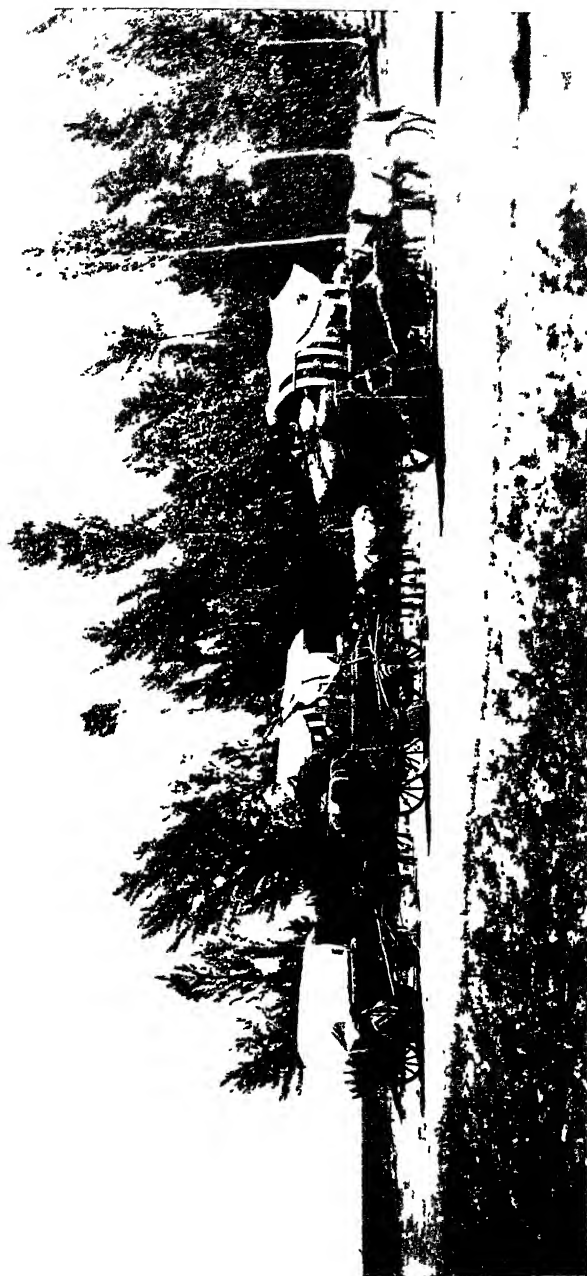
The two most promising commercial lines for Persian interests would be, I think, one from Tehran to Khanikin (80 miles from Baghdad), *vid* Hamadan and Kirmanshah, a distance of 370 miles, and a light branch line from Kirmanshah to Ahwaz, on the Karun river, 270 miles. The former would pass over what may be generally described as easy country, until the descent from the plateau of Persia to the plain of Mesopotamia is reached, at the foot of which lies Khanikin. The descent presents no very great engineering difficulties. The busy thoroughfare of antiquity between Media and Babylonia lay that way, and it has been the popular route to the sacred shrines of Kerbela and Nejef, *vid* Baghdad, for centuries. The ever flowing streams of pilgrims that pass along it from Persia are said to number quite a hundred thousand each year, and this traffic would probably increase with railway facilities, as has been found to be the case in India. It has been authoritatively stated that the Baghdad railway project is certain to be carried out: the completion of this great undertaking, and its connection *vid* Aleppo with Damascus and the Hedjaz line, will draw thousands of pilgrims to the holy places of Islam in Arabia, and also bring Tehran into quick communication with Constantinople and the capitals of Europe. The Persian line would traverse districts rich in corn and wool, and other products, that would not only supplement and cheapen the Tehran markets, but would also afford a large surplus for foreign export by the branch line from Kirmanshah.

This branch line would run to Ahwaz on the Karun, 270 miles, whence there is a water-way of 100 miles for steamers of 300 tons to the Persian Gulf



port, Mohamrah, accessible to vessels of 1,500 tons. Thus Persian trade would avoid Turkish territory, and escape the transit dues now paid on the large volume which enters by the Baghdad route. This line would pass through fertile districts, and it is said that a 2-foot 6-inch gauge railway could be cheaply built, as the rise along the banks of the Kerkhah stream to the plateau at Kirmanshah is believed to be gradual. Such a line would not only monopolise the existing trade, which at present passes up the Tigris to Baghdad by steamer, and thence to Persia by caravan, but would enormously develop it. The cost of transport of goods from Baghdad to Tehran is, roughly, £14 per ton, and from Busrah to Baghdad £1, 14s. per ton. Prohibitive Russian rates compel foreign goods for Tabriz and the north of Persia to enter by the Trebizond route, making a caravan journey of 580 miles. With railway communication to Hamadan from the south, the caravan journey to Tabriz would be reduced to nearly one-half, and it may well be supposed, that considering the great cost of caravan transport, the traders supplying the northern markets would soon find their advantage in adopting the southern route.

The question of fuel which arises in connection with these proposed railways is met by the proved existence of valuable petroleum deposits between Kirmanshah and Khanikin; and it is fully expected that the exploration of the oil-fields in the Karun districts, now being carried on by the Burma Oils Company, will prove equally successful, and thus secure an abundant supply of liquid fuel. The advent of railway enterprise would also direct more practical attention to the coal resources of the Tehran districts. The coal is of good quality, and finds a market in the capital to the extent of about 15,000 tons annually. Of course it will be understood that, follow-



ON THE KASVIN-TEHRAN ROAD PASSENGER WAGGONS USED BY PILGRIMS.

*Servantine photo.*



ing the general custom in the East, the people mostly prefer charcoal and wood for household use, and therefore the Tehran demand for coal is chiefly confined to the European quarter. The average selling rate is high, about £2 a ton, owing to want of competition, and the heavy cost of carriage to the town on camels and donkeys.

I was occupying myself in the spring of 1896 writing a small work on Persia, when the startling news of the assassination of the Shah, Nasr-ed-Din, on the eve of his jubilee of reign, was received, and I then published my book, "Persia revisited," May 1896, with two additional chapters, one dealing with the new Shah and his brothers, and the other with the able and sagacious Grand Vazir, Ali Asghar Khan, and the succession. I may say that this book was favourably reviewed in the Press and well received by the public.

Occasion again arose in 1898 for another visit to Tehran in the interests of the Imperial Bank of Persia. The Chief Manager found it impossible to settle a very important matter with the Persian Government, and he telegraphed for personal assistance from the Board of Directors. My wife accompanied me, and we left London in the middle of September, travelling *via* Vienna, Cracow, and Odessa, to the Black Sea, which we crossed to Batoum in the most perfect weather. We had a comfortable railway journey thence to Baku, and a good passage from Baku to Resht, but the road to Tehran for 100 miles from the coast was still then a rough riding track, with almost quite unfurnished post houses, and the travelling on it could not but be uncomfortable to a lady. I had taken saddlery and some few articles of camp equipment from London, and with a first-rate Belgian courier who knew the road well, and some mounted Persian servants, with a quick-moving sumpter mule, carrying a supply of creature comforts sent from Tehran to meet us, we managed to get along

fairly well. My business in Tehran proved to be easy enough after one or two interviews with my friend the Grand Vazir; and the new Shah, Mozuffer-ed-Din, seemed glad to see me. In token of complete satisfaction with my visit to Tehran, His Majesty favoured me with his photograph bearing the Imperial autograph, and I may add that the Bank had good reason to be pleased with the result of my mission. A good deal of pleasure also was combined with business on this occasion, and my wife enjoyed thoroughly her visit to the capital of Persia. The dinner parties given by Her Majesty's Minister (Sir Mortimer Durand), His Highness the Grand Vazir, His Highness the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and His Highness the Minister for War in compliment to my wife and myself, and the numerous visits paid and received, showed a social success and very friendly feeling. My wife and I enjoyed at the British Legation the kind hospitality of Sir Mortimer and Lady Durand during our visit to Tehran.

We had a cold journey back to the Caspian in November. The usual bitter winter wind had set in before we left Tehran, and this made our ride over the Kharzan pass very trying. The winter storms too had commenced on the Caspian, and our feeling of depression was great when we saw the mail steamer at Enzelli (for Resht) come in merely to go away at once without attempting to land or embark passengers, owing to the heavy surf. After two days spent in the vain hope of seeing her come back (as the weather had improved), we decided to take passage to Baku in the small trading steamer *Oural*, 187 tons, rather than remain longer in discomfort at dismal Enzelli. The *Oural's* light draught allowed of her passing the bar at the mouth of the Enzelli lagoon, and we left on 17th November, occupying the small deck-house, the only cabin accommodation available. The deck was

cumbered with about ninety passengers and their goods, and there was hardly any vacant space to be seen. We started in the evening, and got on well enough till the evening of the following day, when the captain said that the heavy sea and strong head wind which had risen were too much for his boat at night, and he took shelter behind the island of Sari, where I had been storm-bound on a previous voyage.

The next morning we crept out in a thick mist, and shortly after fell in with the steamship *Arax* that had picked up a boat with six men in it belonging to the wrecked steamer *Skalposki* from Lenkoran for Baku, which, crowded with passengers, was badly aground on a submerged bank since the previous afternoon. As the *Arax* was going to the south-east, and the place of the wreck was not far out of our course for Baku, the *Oural* took the boat's crew on board, and steered for the wreck, going slowly, as there was still a thick mist as well as a high sea, and reached it in the evening. The vessel had not gone to pieces, notwithstanding the heavy seas breaking over her forepart, which had gone deep into the soft bank; this had thrust her afterpart high up, partly out of the water, and she had heeled over on her port side, right to the water's edge, sloping the deck to an angle of about 30°. The passengers and crew were clinging to the side rails and the bridge, and wherever there was holding on the starboard side. There came from them a ceaseless hum of crying voices, still uncertain of their lives, for there was a very heavy sea running. But the *Oural's* crew were soon at work with their one safe boat (the other was found, when lowered to leak dangerously), and a hawser was passed to the wreck, by means of which two boats, carrying ten passengers each, were able to pass to and fro, and rescue every one on board the *Skalposki*, a total of one hundred and fifty-one men and three women, mostly Oriental

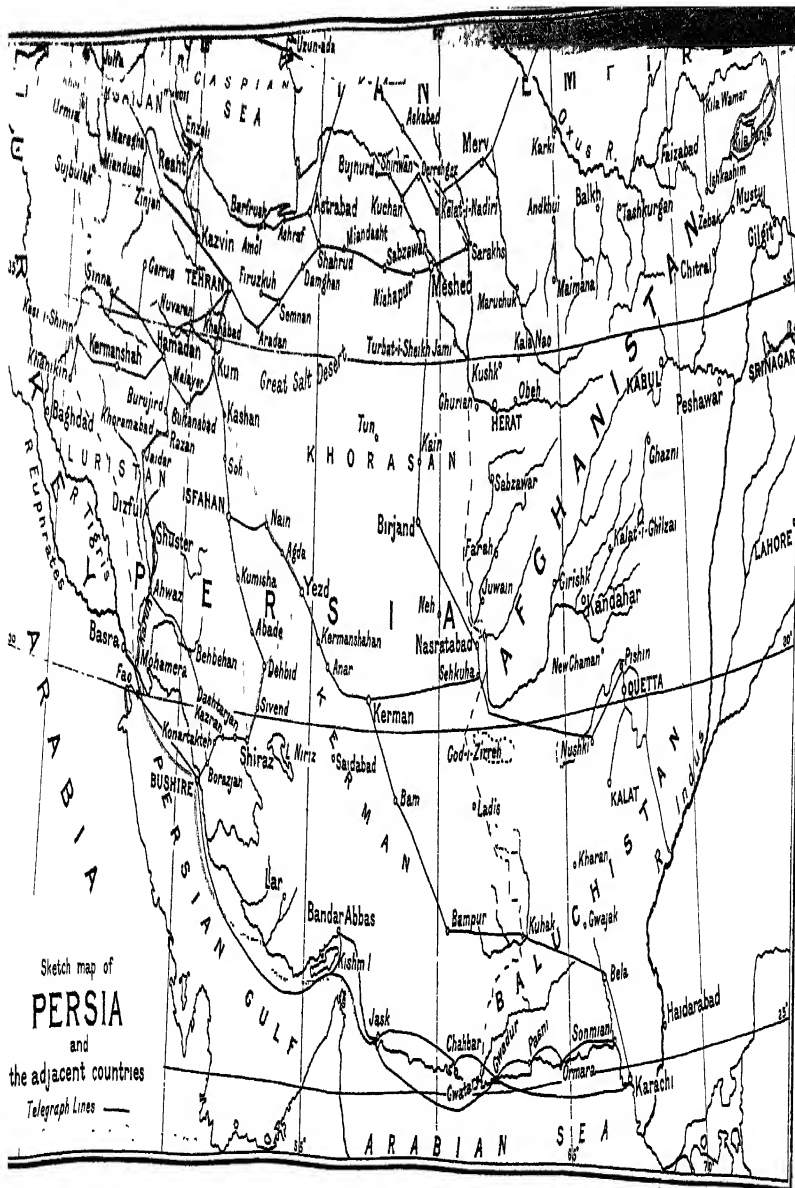
Russian subjects. Perfect order prevailed while the rescue was proceeding. The women were first cared for, and one man, who lowered himself down a rope in his eager hurry to get into the first boat, was left for some time hanging over the side (evidently tied to the rope) as a warning and punishment. The wind kept rising while the boats were passing to and fro, and all were saved just in time, for it was evident that the vessel was certain to break up during the night. The passengers lost almost everything they had on board, and they were shoeless, as they had been better able to cling to the slippery slope of the deck with bare feet. The captain was the last to leave the wreck, and he came on board the *Oural* hugging his cabin clock. The deck of our 187-ton vessel, previously crowded with ninety passengers, and now increased by one hundred and fifty-four more, was a curious sight; but all shook down patiently and cheerfully, and the *Oural*, after labouring and rolling heavily all night and part of the following day, reached Baku in safety. I have mentioned this shipwreck to show how admirably the sufferers behaved throughout, and the chivalrous care that was taken to provide first for the safety of the women.

We made a short stay at Tiflis on our way over from Baku to Batoum, and proceeded home *via* Constantinople, Athens, Corfu, Naples, and Rome.

I shall finish this narrative of my varied life by saying that, retaining my interest in Persia and Persian affairs, and keeping myself *au courant* of all that transpires relating to them, I was able to write "The Problem of the Middle East" in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine* of March 1900, and to contribute part of "Persia and the Persian Gulf," which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* of January 1902.











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